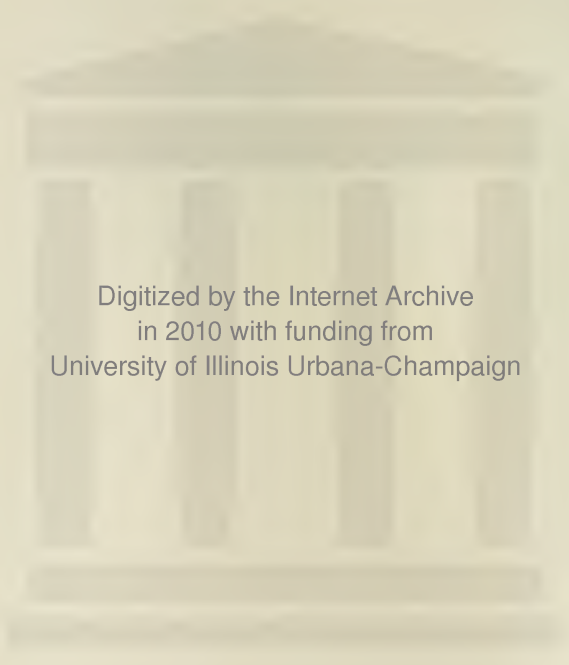


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YARNDALE.

VOL. III.

LONDON: PRINTED BY
SPOTTISWOODE AND CO., NEW-STREET SQUARE
AND PARLIAMENT STREET

C. T. H. "Hence 1872"
The Rev. R. P. L. L.

YARNDALE:

AN UNSENSATIONAL STORY.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:
LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.
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OF

THE THIRD VOLUME.



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alternately. The only visitor that could not have been expected was, forsooth, the stout German who had made such a funny exhibition of himself at Warwick. Yarnsdale abounds in Germans, many of whom are thriving and wealthy merchants, and Herr Pfuffer—for that was his name—had been staying some time there with a member of a firm to which he was attached as a sort of sleeping connection. So that some eight or ten were awaiting Dolman's arrival with that gentle impatience which is the characteristic even of amiable people who are kept from their dinner by the unpunctuality of a fellow-guest.

‘Has he forgotten the engagement in some fresh attraction, think you?’ asked Alice, laughing; ‘or has he met with one of his romantic adventures, which has detained him, I wonder?’

‘Not he,’ said Frederick; ‘he is not forgetful of his dinner; and he is now sobered down into a steady-going, hard-reading lawyer: he has missed his way, or the omnibus; or he has not been able to get a cab; something of the kind has happened, for I parted from him at two o’clock, when he said that he would be with us here at six.’

‘That young man,’ said Mr. Shorland, sen., ‘would have been a bad one to break into our

Yarndale way of business; he has never been trained to be at his work as the clock strikes; he thinks, I'll be bound, that half-hours go for nothing; whereas it is really the picking up of these half-hours that makes the difference between a profit and a loss.'

'Gathering up the fragments that remain,' added Jacob sententiously.

'I understand,' said Monkhouse, 'that he is studying very steadily under an eminent barrister; and, possessing as he does many qualifications for the legal profession, I have great hopes that he will achieve success. He has more stability at the bottom than he pretends to have.'

Here there was a brisk ring of the bell, and soon after Dolman was announced, somewhat warm and flurried from his hasty walk.

Mrs. Shorland received him with a hearty greeting, Alice with much kindness of feeling, and paterfamilias with a certain show of hospitable welcome. Graham was presented to him as an acquaintance of former days; and Mrs. Jephson was introduced in due form. But the great sensation was reserved for the meeting of Herr Pfuffer and Dolman, neither of whom expected such a pleasure. When each was brought to recognise the other, the German after his fashion rushed into Dolman's arms,

gave him a smacking salute, and hugged him most affectionately, to the great amusement of the bystanders.

‘Why, you are old friends, it seems,’ said Mr. Shorland; ‘where have you met before, I should like to know? Men who love travelling, I suppose, often put up together,—sometimes in strange places.’

‘That is just it,’ replied Herr Pfuffer—‘that is just it—the right guess. We travelled together from Oxford, and we did put up together in de Inn at Warwick on one noisy night, when I was a bad sufferer from de ill treatment of de hostess and servants; and this gentleman did stand my goot friend.’ Here in his broken English he gave the company an epitome of his nocturnal and matutinal distresses, to their great amusement, maintaining that Dolman had stood his ‘goot friend.’

At dinner Dolman sat next to Mrs. Jephson. She was a stout, short, round-faced body, with much easy good-nature about her, but no superabundance of intellect. At any rate it worked in a circle of a short radius, though it might be proportionately clear and intense. Dolman tried her on several topics, but failed to elicit any lively response. By degrees he discovered that her mental and conversational powers ranged only within the limits of her babies and

the minister she 'sat under'—a position which, in its literal sense, would not be very agreeable when the minister was eighteen stone; and so, not content to be silent, he was compelled to give her up and address himself to some more distant listener.

'I am afraid, Mrs. Shorland, I kept you waiting,' he said, speaking in a key just loud enough to be heard over the table; 'I am very sorry for the circumstance, but I was detained by an adventure—an adventure that was reluctantly thrust on me, I do assure you.'

'Are not your days of adventure over, Mr. Dolman?' asked Mrs. Shorland, laughing. 'Is it not time for you to settle down from romance to an ordinary matter-of-fact life, like that of other people?'

'Indeed, that is my wish: nothing can be more matter-of-fact than my present life—six hours a day spent on dry pleadings and unsentimental law-books. But somehow adventures are thrust on me against my will, especially in Mudlington; and what makes them more romantic, the ladies are generally at the bottom of them.'

'You ought to have lived in the days of knight-errantry or the crusades, Mr. Dolman,' said Miss Shorland.

'What's the adventure that detained you in

Mudlington?' asked Frederick; 'have you met again those stout dames who belaboured you with the besom, and spoilt your Bond Street surtout?'

Dolman here narrated the adventure that had detained him; he gave the details with becoming delicacy, but with sufficient clearness to indicate the true cause of the fray and the persons concerned in it. He was himself surprised to find with what breathlessness his account was listened to, as the scene depicted gradually opened out and moved on majestically to its close. He was not at all aware how powerfully and how variously his recital was stirring up the feelings of those around him.

Graham saw through the incident at once: he clenched his teeth, compressed his lips, and scarcely drew his breath till he saw the fellow tipped into the black ditch and heard him sputtering out the filthy water. He then felt more at ease, but resolved to see further into the matter at the proper time. Mrs. Shorland fixed her eyes on her plate, and wondered what her husband was thinking of the incident. Miss Shorland would have been amused at the narrative, as confirming her unfavourable view of Brierly, had she not felt it would be extremely galling to Graham. Frederick chuckled over the tale, and especially over its catastrophe,

but said nothing. Mr. Shorland pretended not to hear it, being seized with a sudden fit of attention to his duties at the bottom of the table. Jacob moved uneasily on his seat, and crumbled his bread, but kept silent. So that Dolman, after depicting a striking scene in picturesque colours, found himself landed in the midst of a dead silence—that most disagreeable condition to the clever story-teller—when he expected to be greeted with applause.

‘Mine Gott!’ said the German, breaking the silence very opportunely,—‘but you did hit the big blow. I would not like to meet you in fisticuff.’

‘If your blood were up, sir, you would not be afraid. On that eventful morning at Warwick you would have tried your strength with a giant.’

‘Yase, by gar, my blood was up. I will take a glass of sherry with you, sir, after your encountare.’

Mr. Puffer had tasted the sherry, and found it to be exceedingly fine and luscious. Now, it so happened that Mr. Shorland’s decanter of toast-and-water had from some mistake been placed within his reach, and, being clear as the wine, he filled up a large glass from it, enjoyed it for a few moments by anticipation, and then drained it off at a draught.

‘Hah! bah! vater!’ he exclaimed, putting down his glass in great disgust, and distorting his features, as if he had imbibed so much physic. He was undeniably angry; the flow of his natural benevolence was suddenly checked. His wrath was æsthetic: it was not that he had received any injury from the toast-and-water, as might have been the case if it had been castor-oil; it was not that the mistake was irremediable, for the genuine fluid was before him: but what gave the shock to his system, was the revulsion with which his prospective and realistic enjoyment was checked; as the fond lover, delectating himself with a serenade under his mistress’s window, may be supposed to get a sudden start and disagreeable chill by receiving a pailful of cold water on his head.

‘Vater! sare, vater!’ the German repeated, as if there was a nauseous taste in his mouth; and then seizing the decanter of sherry, and trying it with more caution, he made ample amends for his previous rashness. The incident, however disagreeable to Herr Pfuffer, excited some laughter, and extricated the guests from the unfortunate silence into which they had fallen; it served to open out easily the sluices of conversation that had been so inopportunistly choked.

‘And how is trade, Mr. Jacob?’ inquired

Dolman, who had the tact to perceive that there was something under the surface of his narrative which caused a restraint throughout the party, and who was accordingly anxious to start a fresh subject;—‘stock-taking, I hear, to-day,’—has it been, as we say in Kent, an average yield?’

‘Just moderate, sir—but moderate—only moderate. Moderation, however, is perhaps the safest condition. Did not a wise man once wish for neither poverty nor riches? And are we not told to let our moderation be known unto all men?’

‘How you talk, Mr. Jacob! You are like all the class of traders; I never yet knew one who was doing well, and yet, as a rule, they seem to thrive. We hear of people “enjoying bad health.” You are always in bad health, Mr. Jacob, and yet you seem to enjoy it. I suspect that we discover the ways of merchants in that of the Irishwoman, who lost by every box of matches she sold, and yet was thankful to Providence that she sold a mighty deal of them.’

‘Quite wrong, sir—quite wrong. Conduct trade on such a principle, and you will soon find yourself in the Gazette.’

‘We go, sir, rather by the rule of contrary, I admit,’ said Mr. Shorland, sen.; ‘if we hear

of a man boasting of his returns, the next thing we expect to hear of him is, that he is in the Insolvent Court.' The truth was, the firm of Shorland and Co. had gone through the process of a most agreeable stock-taking, and the senior partner could, therefore, afford to be facetious. 'And what, may I ask, is *your* notion of the laws of trade? Do you understand the principle of buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest?'

'I only know that whenever I have bought a pair of boots in the cheapest market, I have found them to be of the dearest.'

'Nonsense; that is buying alone—not buying and selling.'

'No: I was never a seller, but I have been sold. Partly, however, I know your meaning, sir. If, for instance, we could buy some people at the valuation of their neighbours, and sell them at their own, we should drive a roaring trade.'

'By gar,' said the German, pausing in his masticatory process,—'but we should soon grow rich on that barter. We all do think of ourselves twenty-five per cent. better than others do think of us.'

'Your son, sir,' continued Dolman, 'has become a tradesman, first-rate, and he was brought up under my guidance. You would

find him a proficient in rule of three, practice, and tare and tret.'

'Well, yes—he is shaping very well—shaping very well—how much he owes to you I do not know. He has worked his part to some profit—to some small profit; we cannot complain: only he is bitten with these silly crotchets about churches and schools and mechanics' institutions and model cottages—foolish fancies!—foolish fancies!—we did very well without such things when I was young,—but I suppose he must have his way.'

'And how were you his guide, Mr. Dolman?' inquired Mrs. Shorland.

'At College, ma'am, I instilled good principles into him. If I recollect right though, when he took his degree, his accounts were found to be rather in confusion; the balance-sheet was against him. Ask Mr. Graham there.'

Frederick would have winced at this remark six months ago; but now it glanced off from him very harmlessly: a partner in the firm, and careering in the full swing of business, he looked back upon his small deficit as a very unimportant affair.

'Probably,' said he, 'that little matter may have been of service to me as well as your paternal advice. Do you think Graham would

have formed any exalted notion of your tradesmanlike qualifications from what he saw?’

‘I had the happiness indeed once to entertain Mr. Graham at my rooms; but the occasion was abnormal. It was after business hours. If I recollect right you thought it your duty to conduct Mr. Graham to his hotel under the impression that he was slightly shaky and fatigued—a little obfuscated and disguised—’

‘The boot on the other leg, I guess!’ muttered paterfamilias.

‘That you exhorted him to sobriety all the way, and then got into a scrape with Proctors and ostlers as a *finale*.’

‘And where were you all the time?’ inquired Mrs. Shorland, laughing.

‘Indeed, ma’am, to say the truth, we were all mops and brooms together. It was our final Supper-party after taking our Degrees. I encountered the Head of the College, and sang for his special gratification the popular air of “The Little Pigs.”’

‘The Leetle Peeks!’ said the German, who was very musical; ‘I never heard of that air.’

‘Which popular air I had to turn into Doric Greek. Monkhouse there, who, as well as your son, is a reformed character, did it for me. By the way, Shorland, I have met several

times in London with that little funny fellow of our College called Jukes, on whom we played off, I am sorry to say, some practical jokes during one of the short vacations; and what do you think he is?’

‘An embryo barrister, perhaps.’

‘No, he could hardly aspire to such a position as that. He is a popular preacher in a fashionable church or chapel. He gyrates with his jewelled finger, gesticulates with his whole body, and makes admirable play with his scented white pocket-handkerchief. He raises the waters in ladies’ eyes, and has brought even an alderman to the preparatory state of blowing his nose. He condescends to speak to me—just, but he takes care to let me know that there is a wide distinction between us.’

‘What kind of tricks did you play on him?’ inquired Alice. ‘Perhaps it is in the recollection of them that he bids you stand aloof.’

‘Certainly not; he was quite ignorant of the pleasing interest we took in his well-being.’

‘Do you recollect any practical illustrations of that interest?’

‘Let me see,—I think I can recollect some incidents in which your hopeful brother, myself, and Jukes were mixed up. It is not

becoming to tell tales out of school, I know; but as we are now all grown into steady-going, plodding men, we may perhaps get too good, unless we call to mind our misadventures, now and then. Is not that good doctrine, Mr. Jacob?’

‘Well, yes—quite middling—the recollection of our short-comings should teach us humility; and we are told in Scripture “not to be high-minded, but to fear.”’

‘But what about your friend, the popular preacher?’ inquired Alice.

‘At College he was not a man of our set; but staying up with us one Christmas Vacation, when the few who are residents see a good deal of each other, almost of necessity, we became acquainted with him. You know, sir,’—to Mr. Shorland—‘industrious young gentlemen sometimes remain at College through the short vacations for the purpose of reading—and such was our intention. Such too, I presume, was the intention of Mr. Jukes. He was a true, thorough-bred, unsophisticated, unspoiled Cockney—a thin, puny, sallow, miserable-looking creature, who might have been suckled by the apothecary and reared on pickles.’

‘You don’t mean that, though?’ inquired Jacob, doubtingly.

‘Small in person, however, he resembled all the Cockney species in the magnitude of his ideas and pretensions. He utterly despised a person who had never seen London, and looked with something like pity on all who had not, on their first entrance into life, inhaled the foggy atmosphere of the City. So far had he carried his ideas of metropolitan superiority that he fancied a Londoner must be possessed intuitively of dignity and versatility of acquirements commensurate with the dimensions of the city. We got him out for an afternoon’s skating—in which art, coming from the metropolis, he professed to be a fair performer. We buckled on his skates for him very carefully; when he rushed forward on the ice, seemingly quite confident in his skill. Immediately, however, his feet separated, and down he came on his back, sliding several yards in his prostrate condition. “What’s amiss?” cried one. “Not hurt, I expect?” asked another. “Halloa Jukes, pick up the bits, and try again, as the little children’s song says,” shouted a third, as he cut the outside stroke and wheeled within half a yard of the nose of the fallen one. “Confound this country ice!” muttered Jukes in a disappointed tone, taking off his skates, and occasionally rubbing the bruises;—“confound this

country ice; if it had only been on the Serpentine! ” ”

‘But one tumble is one tumble any where!’ reasoned the German.

‘I suppose,’ said Mrs. Shorland, ‘he was not much hurt.’

‘O no; he recovered from his shock without being bled, and we soon gave him another trot out.’

‘Had you not better meditate in secret on past short-comings?’ inquired Frederick; ‘that will be most profitable for self-discipline.’

‘A public confession,’ interposed Alice, ‘is indicative of humility.’

‘Go on,’ added paterfamilias; ‘that’s the way you tare and tretted it, as we say in the warehouse.’

‘Well—one evening, after dinner, we heard that the College servants were going to act a play in the town. It was usual for them to do so, to relieve the idleness of a vacation, many being of a literary and dramatic turn. So we resolved to go to the performance. We had much to do, to prevail on Jukes to join us; for he had seen plays in London, and how should he care for any in the country? We paid a shilling on entering the extemporaneous theatre, and found the tragedy of ‘Hamlet’ in progress. Miss Ophelia was in her mad fits—

a big strapping Amazon large enough for three Ophelias rolled into one—and she displayed vigour consistently with her size and strength. The actors generally elicited the loudest applause; and in the last scene there were such threats, such rattling of swords, such retorts of defiance, such poisonings, such tumbling head over heels, that the cheers rose like a hurricane. “O but it is affectionate!” said an old woman who sat next to me, washing down her sympathies with a glass of gin from a bottle she carried with her,—“it’s downright tragedy and affectionate!” Now it so happened that while the house was ringing with applause within, the Proctor was demanding admission at the door. He need not have been so particular in vacation-time—it was not usual to be so—but he was one of those gentlemen who are troubled with an uneasy conscience. This conscience told him he must do his duty! It is wonderful how much mischief that style of man makes in the world—your sublimated being, who is all conscience! “Whom have we here?” he said in his consequential tone to the money-taker. “Hamlet, or the Prince of Denmark,” was the cool reply—“no half price when Shakspeare’s plays is performed!” The Proctor, however, with his attendants, forced his way in, and found us all in a

delightful state of excitement and uproar. One of our party, seeing the Proctor, bounced on to the stage, rushed across it, strode over the prostrate Queen of Denmark, upset Horatio and an Ambassador, and made his escape through a back door with a burst of laughter. "Ha! ha! capital! beautiful, uncommon!" exclaimed the maudlin old woman with the gin-bottle, who thought it a part of the piece; and then, turning to the Proctor who was near her, and slapping him familiarly on the back, she added, as the expression of her own private opinion,—“Beats Coving Garding all to rags!” The man in authority was himself evidently amazed at his position; but his conscience told him he must do his duty; and as poor Jukes happened to stand close to him with a very white face and a very vacant aspect, he put him through the ordinary crucible of questions, — “Member of the University? name? College?” and ordered him to come up for sentence next day. Now, Shorland there, who is holding down his head, and I were standing at no great distance from the scene of parley, sheltered from view by a fat countryman and his wife. They, and many others, were persuaded that it all formed a part of the tragedy; they thought the Proctor in his velvet robes was some great potentate coming

to seize certain of his refractory subjects. We acted as fuglemen, and the cheers grew more vociferous. Whether the Proctor's conscience was satisfied, or he did not quite like his position, he certainly beat a hasty retreat. Poor Jukes got off pretty well,—he was all but frightened out of the little wit he had, and he had to turn into Latin, if I recollect right, a number of the “Spectator.”’

‘You say he will scarcely speak to you,’ said Alice; ‘his recollections of your College acquaintance, it would appear, are not very agreeable.’

‘Once when I met him in the Strand, I asked him if he had given up attending plays and such like vanities, when he turned up the whites of his eyes, and waived me off with a slow graceful motion of his lily-white hand.’

‘Ah!’ said Shorland senior,—‘that’s the way the money goes. While we old fogies, as you call us, are striving to get money, you young malaperts are spending your time in tom-fooleries and silly marlocks. It’s well for some of you that you have had fathers before you.’

‘Relaxation, sir! relaxation! Hard readers require relaxation: all work and no play make Jack a dull boy; your very active gentlemen in the grey department would not get quit of

the same number of parcels they do, if they did not unbend the bow on appropriate occasions.'

'Unbend me no unbending, sir! The establishment of Shorland and Co. would never have been raised to what it is by such goings on; your merry-andrew pranks might be fine fun, but they would spoil your balance-sheet, sir; they would bring you into the Bankruptcy Court, sir, and land you in the work-house.'

'On another occasion,' continued Dolman, 'we had a diverting rise out of the little Cockney. One morning, at breakfast, it was evident that he had something serious on his mind. His appetite was gone. He had received a letter. What was it? A dunning epistle, requesting the payment of "his small account," or a writ, or a Proctorial summons, or what? It proved to be a challenge from a Lieut. O'Donnaghan, who was passing through Oxford together with his wife and sister, one of whom Jukes had insulted on the previous day. "You recollect," he said, "as we were walking up Headington Hill yesterday we saw two females: what they were, I did not know, but I took them for servant-girls, or milliners' apprentices, or some young females, not ill-dressed, taking a stroll." "Yes, I re-

member; and what did you do to them?" "Do to them! I did nothing to them." "Yes, but you must have done something to them, or why this letter?" "Well, I just spoke to one, as we were passing them." "And what did you say? Come, out with it." "Why, I only just whispered—I meant no harm—just whispered—in a jocular way—Well, you *are* a duck, as the drake said." We pronounced that it was a becoming platform for a duel. Jukes, however, did not see it in that light. Not that he cared about fighting so much, if it were not for frightening his mother. We argued that his mother would not know, if he escaped, and if he were killed, he would not himself care. Besides, he stood at an advantage, being only five feet while his adversary was six feet two in his stockings. We advised him to get a London pistol, London powder, London bullets, and London percussion-caps, and he would be sure to wing his man. He, however, took the other side of the argument, and could not be brought to understand that there was anything rational in placing a human being on a level with a moorcock or a partridge. After a while, ma'am, your good son and I undertook to see Lieut. O'Donnaghan, and have an explanation; and we all agreed that if we could effect an amicable arrangement, on terms alike

honourable to both parties, Jukes was to give us a dinner and wine. In due time, we returned, having achieved success; the difference was reconciled; Lieut. O'Donnaghan was satisfied with our explanation; the feelings of the ladies were pacified; the honour of the gentlemen was unsullied. Now, it happened on the same afternoon we strolled up Headington Hill again, and saw before us the identical couple of ladies. What was to be done? "Go up, Jukes, and say you were sorry for the incident of yesterday. It would only be doing the gallant." Jukes advanced, stammered out a few words of apology, and was immediately answered by the uncomplimentary remark, "Does your mother know you are out? Get along with you, you goose." "Well, I do declare," said Jukes, when we had walked on some hundred yards, and after he appeared thoroughly to have digested his opinion by mature deliberation with himself,—“I do declare—and I don't care who knows it—that notwithstanding the fuss this big brother of hers makes about her—I do believe that she's no better than a baggage!”

‘I once did travel with a Lieut. O’Flanagan,’ said the German; ‘I wonder wedder it was de same.’

‘I fear, sir, our Lieutenant was only a myth

—a fiction of the brain; he had never been seen in the flesh, as Monkhouse would say—in *propria personá*, as we lawyers express it.’

‘Was the dinner a myth too?’ inquired Alice.

‘Certainly not; it went off admirably.’

‘Your Mr. Jukes,’ said Shorland senior, ‘may make a first-rate popular preacher, but he would make only a bad man of business; I should not like to engage him as a salesman at the price of his salt.’

‘How is it, Monkhouse,’ inquired Dolman, ‘that your most goosey men are your most popular preachers?’

‘First, I take exception to your platform, to use your own word,’ Monkhouse replied; ‘I dispute your “major;” I do not think it is to be taken for granted, as a universal proposition, that your most goosey men are your most popular preachers.’

‘Well, very likely; universal propositions are scarce; but you must allow that goosey men are not unfrequently popular preachers. Boys of whom nothing could be made at school—youths who managed to be plucked with ease at College—men who have never evinced a scintilla of intellect—have within my knowledge developed into the pulpit pets of elderly ladies and blooming spinsters.’

‘Men,’ suggested the German, ‘of large beauty, and rich complexion, and white hands, and curly heads.’

‘That may have something to do with it; but you must go deeper to solve the problem; it has always been a puzzle to me.’

‘It need not be much of a puzzle,’ said Monkhouse. ‘Popularity is mainly made up of rather rude elements. In its low sense, it cannot be attained without the suppression of refined sensibilities, and the expansion of what is rough, flaunting, and vulgar in our nature. It often happens, therefore, that men of inferior minds, and, correspondingly, of coarse dispositions, obtain a certain amount of applause from the uneducated and indiscriminating, whether educated or not. The truth will hold generally. Many an orator of dull sensibilities gets on tolerably in the House of Commons and at the Bar, when one of more refined sentiment and acute sensibility does not succeed so well. So it is in the pulpit, for exaggeration is dealt in as profusely there as elsewhere. So it is on the platform, where the speaker more frequently angles for applause than argues for truth.’

‘Is it not a shame that it should be so?’ inquired Dolman. ‘Here am I,—I would

venture a trifling bet that I could make a much more popular preacher than yourself.'

'No shame at all: it answers a good purpose in the end. I should not like certainly to see hard-faced, hard-mouthed nonsense altogether carry the day; but it does its part in the economy of oratory. Consider how large a portion of our audiences prefer what is stirring, even though it be of a vulgar kind, to a more refined mode of expression and a more reasoning style.'

'Then, all I advise you, Monkhouse, is—to rub off some of your shining classical surface, rub a brass candlestick on your face, and come out a rough-tongued, full-fledged orator of a twenty-parson power in the high popular school.'

'Thank you: I fancy that the smooth classical surface you speak of is gradually going; I certainly come in contact with some sharp edges and rough angles which might be likely to take the shine out of it—men set round with spikes from their birth: such a state of friction would just suit your wrought-iron disposition.'

'I hear, Mr. Graham,' said Alice, 'you are Mr. Monkhouse's right-hand man in dealing with the managers of the Mount Pleasant

School. Frederick there loses his temper, I am told, and so runs a risk of losing the battle. You are getting on very well though, I understand.'

'Yes, we are making some progress, I am happy to say. I hope to see the day when we shall make a visible impression on the whole neighbourhood. Indeed, we have already made a fair start. Through the means and assistance of Mr. Frederick'—here he dropped his voice as he did not wish it to reach the head of the firm—'we are working a great change upon the character of our workpeople, and this influence will extend beyond ourselves. I wish every employer in Mudlington felt the same interest in his operatives as your brother. Then, Mr. Monkhouse is making way with the people. Our young folks are beginning to appreciate his efforts in their behalf. We have got together a very large Mutual Improvement class for young men under his presidency; and they seem to value very much the attention he pays to them.'

'A what?' inquired Dolman, scarcely catching Graham's remarks.

'A Mutual Improvement Society.'

'What on earth is that?'

'A class for improvement by mutual help,' said Frederick Shorland—'just in the way you became a proficient in wrestling, boxing, and fencing at school.'

‘I never heard of such a system as applied to mental education.’

‘Why not for mind as well as body? Was not the Union at Oxford a mutual improvement society? Is not the world at large one great class for the same object? Have not you incipient barristers mutual improvement societies by discussion and conference?’

‘And what kind of pupils are your young mutuals, Monkhouse?’ inquired Dolman.

‘On the whole, very promising. The class consists of warehousemen, mechanics, packers, shopkeepers, and such like; and you may be sure their wits are pretty well sharpened on the whetstone of trade. Some are very clever fellows, who can write a fair essay and speak fluently; some are rather conceited youths, it is true, but not ill-meaning; and some are just moderate in intellect. They will make good progress in literary attainments, if they persevere, as, I think, many of them will.’

‘Do they pay much deference to your Reverence as you occupy the chair of dignity?’

‘I have met with no disrespect, nor do I conceive I shall.’

‘They feel,’ said Graham, ‘that Mr. Monkhouse is a very long way ahead of them; I don’t think from what I have seen of such classes, that it is quite safe for a person to have the

presidency of one, unless he is felt to be superior to the members.'

'What stay are you making, Mr. Dolman?' inquired Mrs. Shorland.

'About a week or so. On New Year's Day the foundation-stones of your new church and school are to be laid, at which ceremony I purpose to be present; I have an invitation, also, to the monster tea-party in the evening. Soon after these gravities and gaieties are over, Shorland there, Monkhouse, and myself, are going to fulfil an old engagement, and enjoy a little rustic relaxation with Monkhouse's father. Then, heigh-ho for London again, and hard work!'

After tea the German came out in music and singing, at which he was a proficient; and he was very urgent, but without effect, that Dolman should favour the company with his popular air of 'The Leetle Peeks.'

CHAPTER II.

A SOCIAL GATHERING.

NEW YEAR'S DAY is an annual holiday at Yarn-dale. The steam-engine is still ; the rumble of machinery ceases ; the millions of spindles are at rest ; the tall chimneys vomit not forth their coal-black smoke : so, too, the palatial warehouses are closed ; calicoes, flannels, fustians, are permitted to lie unmoved ; grey cloths and domestics court not a customer ; fancy goods blush unseen. The shops, also, for the most part are darkened by their shutters, while their doors are locked. New Year's Day is a *dies non* in the Yarn-dale trade. And where are the reasoning agents that direct and control, that work and keep in motion, the great commercial machine ? The wealthy are entertaining their families and friends ; the young warehouseman is perhaps spending a short holiday at his country home ; of the operatives, some pass the day in innocent recreation, sitting down with their families to a good Christmas dinner and treating them in the evening to a musical

entertainment which combines cheapness with purity and refinement of taste; others may be seen, as the day is drawing to a close, reeling from the gin-shop, the casino, or some public-house of filthy resort, brainless, moneyless, and ready to curse their families when they get home for their own extravagance.

In Mudlington the present New Year's Day was a memorable one. About one o'clock a stream of people might have been seen moving onward towards the spot where the ceremony was to be performed of laying the foundation-stones. Flags were flying and a band of music was playing. The day was cold, clear and frosty, and the music was heard all over Mudlington. Many pleasant faces—clean, well-washed operative faces—were in the crowd; old men were there who had been all their lives in the neighbourhood, and never seen a resident clergyman among them; middle-aged people were there, who saw in the proceedings an earnest that the poor were cared for, and that the district would undergo improvement; young men and women were there, who looked with pleasure on the ceremony, perhaps without sufficiently weighing its importance. Who, indeed, can sufficiently weigh the importance of such an event? Who can foresee in their full extent the benefits to a poor, populous, and uncultivated district from a

single well-conducted school and free parish church where the Gospel is fully and fairly preached?—benefits that will go on increasing and extending from a single point in the flight of ages? It is not, however, to the ceremony of laying the foundation-stones that this chapter is to be devoted. It is enough to say, that prayers were offered up, addresses delivered, the ‘Old Hundredth’ and the National Anthem sung, and the meeting dispersed.

What is your notion, friendly reader, of a tea-party? Your idea probably is made up of some sixteen persons—more than one half in expansive crinoline, sitting close to each other in a semicircle, as though they were maintaining the blockade of a harbour, while the remainder of the guests in dress coats and demonstrative waistcoats are handing about the cups and saucers in fear and trembling lest they tread on ladies’ toes or deluge their dresses.

The tea-party which we are now attending is of a very different kind; and if you are unacquainted with the monster fashion in which such gatherings are got up in manufacturing districts, read on patiently, and one will be described to you. The steady portion of the operative classes are fond of such social meetings; they have but few opportunities of entertaining friends at their houses, and so they

come with more zest to a meeting on a large scale, which combines the several attractions of eating, conversing, singing, and speech-making.

Imagine a school-room that will hold some seven or eight hundred persons, brilliantly lighted up and profusely decorated. Flags are suspended in various parts; mottoes in large letters, containing prudent maxims, are fastened to the walls; pictures are arranged becomingly round the room; evergreens are festooned here and there, abundantly but not without taste; Chinese lamps are hanging from the ceiling; the ordinary gas pendants are decorated with curiously cut and variously coloured paper. There is something dazzling and artistic about the whole appearance of the room; and each guest for the evening regards it as his or her own drawing-room, in which he or she for a ninepenny ticket has a vested interest for at least three or four hours.

Who have been at the trouble of all this elaborate decoration? Or, who have borne the expense of it? It has all been done gratuitously; and not only so, but in a spirit of generous zeal. A number of young persons skilled in decorative art have been engaged over the work at intervals for a few days past. The artists have consisted of a few youths of the male sex, but chiefly of lady-teachers; and the young

men have had to encounter many a sally of wit and banter from their more nimble-fingered fellow-workers for their inexpertness in the art of decoration.

The room is also filled with thirty or forty tables covered with snow-white cloths, and the crockery necessary for a tea-party, which is uniform in pattern. If tea and coffee and eatables have been prepared for six or eight hundred, who have achieved this arduous task? Another committee of young people have been appointed for this duty; and what with the preparation of the tea and coffee, the cutting up of currant loaves, the slicing and buttering of plain bread, the arranging of biscuits, the reducing stones of sugar to fragments, the procuring of cream, the setting out of the dessert—and all this for some seven hundred mouths—you may conceive that their hands had not been idle on New Year's Day. No slight undertaking this; but every preliminary had been executed punctually and well. At six o'clock precisely the company was seated, grace was sung, and the rattle of cups and saucers proclaimed that the feast had begun.

Take a general view of the company. You find guests of every age. You see a fair sprinkling of children in arms—the pride of their mothers—and you catch at intervals their

pleasing trebles. As the parents hold them up for inspection to those around, and as the little ones stretch out their arms and crow, there is a general assertion, confidently made, that there never were such fine babies as they. This mother declares that little Sarah began to notice when two months old; another, that Ellen can already 'walk with hold,' young as she is; another, that Jane cut two fine teeth a month before, and bore it so bravely. Then, there are very aged people in the company, grandfathers and grandmothers of some present; they are somewhat grave in their tone of mind, having gone through many years of toil and many a battle with poverty, but they enjoy not the less the pleasant scenes around them. In parts of the room, again, are young ladies and young gentlemen who are 'keeping company' together—the young ladies a little exacting, the young gentlemen very assiduous in their attentions—frequently in white waistcoats and demonstrative cravats. They who come under this category, males and females, are got up with considerable care; indeed, they of the fair sex generally—the engaged, the semi-engaged, and the expecting to be engaged—have plainly paid some attention to their personal appearance: bonnets, ringlets, ribbons, artificials, crinolines, dresses, have been adjusted with much

study from the looking-glass and help from sisterly hands. Here and there, again, we observe lads of about sixteen—representatives of the rising generation—types of young Mudlington—somewhat mercurial in disposition—willing to do a little mischief, but sensible that it would be unbecoming to be caught in it,—such specimens of youthfulness as you occasionally meet with in the street on week-days, extemporising a sort of sailor's hornpipe with their clogs, heel and toe, whistling at the same time 'The Land of Dixie,' and coming down with a rat-tat-tat at the end of the measure. Then we see in various places groups of boys and girls; these are somewhat more noisy than would become an old maid's tea-party; they make a desperate rush at the currant-bread as it is brought on, and, when they have devoured the plunder, clamorously demand more; they are determined to have their nine-pennyworth, like honest traders, and even if the balance be in their favour, there is no great harm, they think. They are full of fun, too, as of cake and tea, cracking their jokes, pelting each other slyly with fragments of bread, and getting up under the rose a friendly little fight occasionally by way of an interlude; when, it may be, there descends from some officious superintendent a counteractive, in the shape of a smart box on

the ear, and a stout altercation ensues between brief authority on the one part and injured innocence on the other.

Let us next look out for some of our old friends. At the high table where Monkhouse presides, are Mrs., Miss, and Frederick Shorland, Dolman, Mr. and Mrs. Crumbleholme, with their son and daughter, Messrs. Jenkins, Corby and Bompas, as School-managers, three or four clergymen, and several others. Mr. and Mrs. Charnock might be seen at one of the tables, smiling and chatty. Mr. Scragson, too, was there, somewhat to the surprise of his friends; 'but you see,' he said, 'the shop is closed on New Year's Day, and I might have got to a worse place; besides, it's all in the way of business, after all—ha! ha! ha!—for they got their beef for sandwiches from me, and I must know how it cuts up—all in the way of business, you understand—ha! ha! ha!' The Maxwells were there, with the exception of the old couple, who were left to keep house. Margaret was by the side of blind Ellen, at whose feet Bess sat, looking up at her beautiful, delicate face and sightless eyes and joining in the meal,—for the two from day to day ate of one loaf and drank of one cup. Jack Timbertoes, also, was a conspicuous object in his new suit, which he seemed to delight in parading before

the eyes of Councillor Jenkins. When the celebrities entered the room, they were greeted with applause according to their popularity, as is usual on public occasions, and none had received a warmer welcome than Jack, — this being greatly to the annoyance of Messrs. Jenkins and Bompas, the latter of whom had already taken two boxes of his patent pills, and had not fully recovered the healthy tone of his digestion, after the application of Jack's stump to his protuberant stomach. Old Sally and her two fellow-lodgers—to whom, the reader may remember, Monkhouse was introduced early on in his ministry—were of the party. Mrs. and Miss Shorland had visited the poor of Mudlington very assiduously during the last few months, and they had been kind to the three old women, affording them many comforts and teaching them to make the most of the means they had. And now Betty, or No. 2, the loquacious one, pushed up to Mrs. Shorland, determined to show her how neat and tidy she looked in her clean, homely dress. Nay, Mrs. Shorland had much to do to restrain the expressions and indeed the practical illustrations of her gratitude; for she seemed resolved not only to exhibit her bonnet and gown, but her red-flannel petticoat, and to display her warm worsted stockings somewhat higher

up the leg than ladies are accustomed to do in public. Old Sally was of course less demonstrative; but she seemed to enjoy herself in her passive way. ‘What, you’re quite smush, Sally,’ said Esther, whom we met in the Sunday School,—‘you’re as fine as a fourpenny-bit, Sally;’ and she, with the aid of a companion, pinned a handkerchief round old Sally’s neck, that she might not slop her new gown; ‘and you shall have some nice tea and currant-bread, Sally, and something to carry home in your pocket.’ And old Sally, without taking very much notice of what was going on, enjoyed her tea, and with her toothless gums mumbled slowly her currant-bread, after it had been soaked in her saucer, and was in a condition of as much happiness as she was capable of in the torpid state of her faculties. She looked round with a kind of dim wonderment at the scene, and made a sort of acknowledgment by signs to Esther and the other young women that were around her for their kindness.

When the tea had commenced and the guests had laid themselves fairly out for work, a considerable clatter of cups and saucers arose, mingled with a dull heavy hum of conversation. Dolman, whether from accident or a piece of mischievous fun on the part of Frederick Shorland, found himself a next neighbour to

some total strangers, and those were Messrs. Jenkins, Corby and Bompas. Tea-parties, like misery, bring men into strange companionship.

‘A somewhat rough neighbourhood, this,’ Dolman rattled on, having taken a hasty guage of his neighbours,—‘it will take a good deal of polishing, I expect; but I understand there is a perceptible improvement going on: I am told that Shorland and Monkhouse are very active in the district.’

‘A real change,’ replied Mr. Jenkins sententially, ‘can only be wrought on Christian principles: it must begin inside a human being and show itself outside a human being. There may be a little outside polish going on here; women may wear bonnets now that once covered their heads with a shawl, and some may have stuff gowns that had only bedgowns; but what does that amount to, if the heart be not changed, sir? What are gowns and bonnets and caps and jackets and scrubbing-brushes for house-floors, if the inner man be not converted on gospel principles, sir?’

‘That’s just it,’ said Mr. Bompas, taking up the subject with his mouth full of bread-and-butter,—‘that’s just it. What’s th’ use o’ this surface claning? It’s like as if yo’ bide content wi’ sweeping a street, when yo’ should

sewer it gradely,¹ and so carry off th' refuse matter. Now, sir—but maybe yò' hanna pondered on sich things—the heart on us'—here he whopped his left side with his dumpy hand—'the heart on us is a cess-pool—full of o' manner o' muck and dirt,—and what is to be done wi't, but to drive a main shore smack through it, sir, and carry off its nastiness? That's the way, sir; but to pass a sweeping-machine ower th' surface, and clear up a bit about the outside gutters, while yo' leave the cess-pool underneath to go on a smelling and breeding disorder,—is there sense or rason or gospel i' that, sir?'

'Permit me,' broke in Mr. Corby; 'without impugning your general principles, you must allow me to doubt how far your inferences are entirely in accordance with truth, gentlemen. For my own part,—I speak under correction, of course,—for my own part, I can see no evidence that there is not an underground sewerage, because the sweeping-machine passes over the surface. Is it not quite as likely that a young woman is a converted person, if she wear a decent frock, as if she wore a bed-gown?'

'Do you teach your children to come to school in their dirt?' inquired Dolman bluntly.

¹ A common word—perhaps from 'greatly,' or 'gradually.'

‘We teach them godliness before cleanliness,’ replied Jenkins; ‘we teach them gospel truth.’

‘We teach a free gospel, too, let me tell you,’ said Mr. Bompas.

‘Does not every Protestant advocate a free circulation of the Scriptures?’

‘I don’t mean that, quite,—I mean a gospel as is not bottled up in Articles and such-like things till it gets stale and flat as ditch-water. The ocean billies is always fresh and free.’

‘I thought your school was in connection with the Church of England under a trust deed?’

‘O, that has nowt to do wi’t.’

‘Allow me as a lawyer to say that it has a great deal to do with it. Allow me further to suggest, that, while you are making your boast of indifference to Church doctrines and principles, you may be bringing somewhat unpleasant consequences on your heads.’

This was not a very agreeable subject to the three managers. So long as there was no one to overlook them, Mr. Bompas delighted in propounding through the school his faith in a free gospel; but now doubts began to arise in the minds of some of the party whether open irregularities had not better be avoided.

‘But,’ Dolman continued, ‘you must surely

perceive a general improvement in the state of the school, and that it is already acting in some degree upon the neighbourhood: you must be thankful for that, making the somewhat loud Christian profession you do.'

'Improvements!' retorted Bompas; 'where will ye find 'em? Bits o' book-larning for the silly young chaps to maunder about! I tell you, this worldly larning I make no 'count on.'

'I am quite sure,' said Dolman, 'that neither the one nor the other of you does. Do not be alarmed that it will ever flourish very much under your fostering care.'

Whether this remark was taken as a compliment, we do not know; for the tea was now over, and the company were rising to sing the grace.

CHAPTER III.

THE FEAST OF REASON.

WHEN the apparatus for tea and the remains of eatables had been cleared away—which, from the number of waiters, was not a tedious operation—the intellectual part of the entertainment commenced. A programme of the proceedings was placed before many of the guests; every thing had been arranged *secundum artem*, and nothing had been omitted which could conduce to the general comfort. The first act after the cloth had been drawn was to join one and all in a good hearty Christmas carol. There were voices many and of every kind—old women's shrill voices and old men's hoarse voices, treble voices, tenor voices and bass voices, voices of boys and girls, of full-grown youths and maidens; and though a refined ear might have detected a discord here and there, they all combined into a noble swell of harmony, which must have exhilarated the spirit of any one who had the slightest appreciation of choral or con-

gregational music. All sang heartily—not in a low, dull, mumbling tone—what Mr. Hullah calls a ‘cacophonous hum’—but ‘lustily, with a good courage;’ and here and there you might have seen a sturdy bass singer opening his mouth wide to catch his note, and moving his head from side to side with oscillations as regular as those of a clock-pendulum, to keep time with his measure. The following Canticle was the piece selected for the opening; and, sung to the old carol tune, ‘The first good joy that Mary had,’ not drawlingly, but in sharp, exact time, there was something spirit-stirring about it, as it swelled from some six hundred stout voices, and was associated with as many happy faces and gladsome hearts.

A Happy, Happy Christmas! and a merry bright New Year!
How sweet the kind old greetings sound to every heart and ear:
No matter how care-burdened, and no matter how deprest;
A something in their welcome makes them dear to every breast.

We heard them in our childhood, when, with spirits light and
gay,
We dreamt not that life's joyfulness could ever pass away;
And tho' long years of carefulness have sobered many a heart;
A joy still lingers round them which can never quite depart.

Nor ever shall—if, Christian like, we count the rolling years,
Not as removing joys from us, but sins, and cares and tears, :
And upward, onward bearing us, to that bright land and blest,
Where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at
rest.

No year can open gloomily for him whose heart doth yearn,
Above all hopes and cares on earth, to see his Lord's return :
As stars their light, and mists their shade, lay down before the
day,
So joys and griefs of earth in Heaven's calm sunshine fade
away.

Good friends! would you with happiness the opening year
begin?
Come kneel by Jesu's cradle-bed, and count the cost of sin!
Then, let the year its colouring of sober duty take:
Rise up,—go forth,—do everything, for your dear Saviour's
sake.

No matter how care-burdened, and no matter how deprest ;
A something in their welcome makes them dear to every breast.
Long may the kind old greetings sound, to every heart and ear,
A Happy, Happy Christmas! and a merry bright New Year.¹

‘A pleasant carol,’ said Dolman, ‘and heartily sung.’

‘Pleasant!’ replied Mr. Bompas, as though a disagreeable odour were rising to his nose,—
‘pleasant! I reckon nowt on’t.’

‘Why, what would you have? It consists of genial words, and it is put to a tune I remember from the time I was a child. It calls up pleasant memories. What would you have?’

‘What would I have? Well, I loike summut as speaks to us of our exper’ences—summut as roots into the dusthole o’ th’ heart, sir—summut as stirs up the old rubbish as lies there

¹ Adapted from a hymn by J. S. B. Monsell, LL.D., 1858.

in the shape o' miseries and sins—summut as lets light into that dusthole, sir, in the shape o' spirit'al conviction and confession.'

'It seems to me,' said Dolman, in his bantering fashion, 'to be rather a jolly way anyhow of confessing sins, when you sing them to a lively air.'

'There you are again, sir,' replied Mr. Bompas; 'yo' may be an Oxford scholard, sir, and know nowt about a change of heart. A man who has exper'enced convarasion would understand what I mean. But maybe yo' don't believe in convarasion.'

'Yes,' said Dolman, 'I do; but whether I should believe in your idea of it, may be another question. What is your notion of it? Perhaps we may agree on the subject.'

'Why, sir, convarasion is being made ower again in the heart—clean made ower again, dump and stump. As I said to Molly Bimson one day as she was a-washing at her door,—“Molly,” says I, “how do you feel?” “Pretty brisk, Mr. Bompas,” says she. “Heart all right?” says I. “First-rate,” says she; “I feel as how I were made ower again, Mr. Bompas, just like these stockings as I took yesterday out o' th' dirty whisket, and, you see, I've darned 'em, and washed 'em, and made 'em ower again.”'

‘How is it,’ asked Dolman, ‘that in such cases you always make an old woman your medium? Besides, don’t you think that the old proverb holds good here, that people had better wash their dirty stockings at home? I would not cast a shadow of ridicule on real conversion; but I should certainly suspect its genuineness when people pin it on their sleeves.’

‘You talk, sir, just as folk without grace do, wheresomever they are,—whether they be rich or poor, larned or unlarned,—o’ i’ one mash-tub.’

Monkouse, in his opening address, took up some parts of the Canticle and intensified the ordinary compliments of the season into a sincere wish for the temporal and spiritual well-being of those present. He thought they had all reason for self-gratulation in the event of the morning, which ushered in the New Year with bright prospects extending down the course of centuries. He begged the forbearance and at the same time the help of all present; and he expanded the idea, that real improvement in such a district as Mudlington could only spring from the united efforts of laity and clergy. ‘By this, I mean, not simply that the laity must supply the clergy with money, but that they must become teachers themselves in

their daily doings and dealings. It has been made a charge, whether justly or not, against some of our body, that they limit the definition of the Church to the clergy themselves: for my own part, I would rather, as it were, take the laity into the priesthood in their every-day duties, and impress them with a corresponding responsibility. (Hear.) We have experienced the liberality of Yarndale,—so great that I could hardly have conceived it beforehand,—and we are heartily thankful for it; but, from the experience I have already gained among you, I feel convinced that the energy of a clergyman is all but wasted, unless the merchant, the manufacturer, the iron-master, the employer of labour in any form, strive, each in his own sphere, to do his part in promoting the moral welfare of the whole population. (Hear, hear.) It is often a matter of delicacy for a master so to exercise his influence over those in his employ; it is always a matter of labour and continued effort to watch for their good. It is much easier to give a hundred pounds and have done with it. But more than this is required if much good is to be effected. There must be a moral influence gained by masters over their workpeople, by integrity and justice in all their doings, by strictness combined with liberality, by good example, by kindly advice.

Compulsion can never be exercised, and ought never to be exercised, over the operative in his social duties; he must be treated as a rational man and a free agent; but he may be acted on through his sense of justice and his feelings of gratitude. (Hear.) Do not suppose from this that I am an advocate for making the working man too much of a pet; some benevolent people from their too fussy attentions would endeavour apparently to smother him with kindness (a laugh); my effort would be to infuse into him a spirit of self-dependence,—not to support him, but to encourage him to support himself. (Hear.) And let me ask for aid, not only from the wealthy, but equally from you who work hard for your daily bread. You can help us in our undertakings; you can encourage us by attending our religious services; you can cheer us by sending your children to our schools. I look for your sympathy and kindly feeling. I hope for your generous aid in my ministerial capacity. I trust that the mutual bond of attachment between us will become closer and closer. (Applause.) My life has been spent for the most part in country districts, where the state of society is entirely different from that of thickly-populated towns; and I will confess to you, that, when I first came

among you, I thought the manners of your people were somewhat uncouth and needlessly independent; but, on a closer acquaintance with them, I have discovered that, underneath a rough surface, there is often a stream of kindly feeling, and a delicate tone of mind and spirit, that would do credit to the wealthiest and most refined in our land.' (Cheers.)

'A very sensible and becoming speech,' said Mr. Charnock to the knot of guests among whom he was sitting. 'Mr. Monkhouse, in my opinion, has hit the right nail on the head: there can never be much good done among manufacturing populations till the employers themselves understand their responsibilities. A very good speech indeed!'

'Well, just middling,' interposed a young man who was an active member of a Protestant Operative Society,—'he isn't amiss—but I like a wick 'un (a lively one), Mr. Charnock—one as has more life in his body and more animation in his elbows.'

'Why, men don't talk with their elbows, do they?'

'I'm not sure that they don't, though, Mr. Charnock,' the man replied, with a cunning look; 'I partly think that they may address an assembly from the crown of their head to the tips of their toes. You've seen Mr. O'Reilly,

the Protestant Operative Lecturer, when he was speaking ? ’

‘ My opinion still is,’ said Miss Scrimples, bridling up her chin—‘ still is, Mr. Charnock, that Mr. Monkhouse wants unction. What he has just said is very good—very good—but, depend on it, he wants unction.’

‘ Well, now,’ Mr. Scragson struck in, ‘ that’s just the way my missus and Josiah Muggleston talk. “ What do you mean by your unction ? ” says I. It may fit in if you fix the word to a pound of suet or an ounce of Everton toffy ; but what do you understand by unction when said of a sermon ? ” “ O,” say they, both together—“ Job Scragson, you’re dark, Job Scragson ; dark as a dungeon into which the blessed sun never shines ”—Ha ! ha ! ha ! ’

‘ Don’t you see,’ replied Charnock, ‘ that a man’s words may be as unctuous as dripping, or butter, or Everton toffy ? ’

‘ That,’ said Jack Timbertoes, oracularly, ‘ is what scholars call a metyphore. But you don’t deal in metyphores, I guess, Mr. Scragson ? ’

‘ No, thank you—nor shall I ever deal in them articles as I never met afore, if it’s all the same to you—not if I know it. I deal in bullocks and calves and sheep, and such-like animals ; I keep the best of meat, as you all know—meat as would lay fat on a skeleton in no time—ha !

ha ! ha !—nobody will get fat on metyphores, Jack, eh ?’

The clergy present were men of earnest but sober views—gentlemen in demeanour and Christian in heart. When Monkhouse first came to Yarndale and fell in with some of his order who entertained extreme opinions, and exhibited these opinions in their conduct, he began to fear lest the clerical body generally in such a manufacturing town might be too full of life and too fond of exhibition for his tastes. But he discovered after a while that there were many earnest, unobtrusive, gentleman-like men among them, and he found much support and gratification in their society. Indeed, it is this class who are the pillars of the Church of England—a class very unobtrusive, but we firmly believe far more numerous in their silence than all the noisier sections of the clergy put together. Men of extreme party views necessarily come most prominently before the world ; they carry off the lion’s share of its applause ; they are the most demonstrative in propagating their opinions, and the most earnest in making converts to them ; but, after all, they are not the real workers in the pastoral hive ; they are useful enough in their line, but they are only the fringes of the Church ministry ; the body of the cloth—that which is to stand the wear and tear

—is made up of those who are more willing to act than to talk, and who believe that the only way to do good is to carry moderation of sentiment into activity of ministerial work.

Some of the clergy addressed the party at the Chairman's request, encouraging, exhorting, and advising. One of them pressed upon the meeting the duty of union—the necessity of working all together for one common unselfish object. He introduced the fable of the bundle of sticks. 'Now,' said he, holding up his forefinger, as though he wished to impress upon his hearers an important truth—'observe, my friends, each clergyman is a stick.'

Here he was interrupted by a hearty burst of laughter. The better order of the manufacturing population have a very quick perception of humour, and relish a funny remark with genuine zest. The speaker was at first unconscious of anything laughable in his observation, and looked round the room for a moment to find out what had excited the mirth. Then he repeated his remark with more energy and emphasis, and in a somewhat remonstrant tone,—'Yes, my friends, each clergyman is a stick—' when, the laughter bursting out again more loudly, he began to perceive that he was making an infelicitous application of the fable, and he laughed heartily himself, escaping from

his equivocal dogma by saying that he 'was going to make each layman and each laywoman a stick, too, and to bind them up into one bundle.'

When Mr. Councillor Crumbleholme rose to address the meeting, he was very loudly cheered. He had taken great interest in Mudlington since his election, and was effecting important changes, present and prospective, in the sewer-ing, paving, scavengering, and lighting of the district. He had also become a staunch supporter of Mr. Monkhouse in his ministerial labours, and very frequently attended his evening Service. He spoke in his kind-hearted, simple manner, occasionally warming into action, when he was vociferously applauded. Mrs., Miss, and Master Crumbleholme, who had never heard a public address from him before, seemed surprised at the gift which had been so long latent in him. He promised to devote his energies in future to the good of the locality, and if he succeeded in his object he would be amply repaid. Mr. Scragson pronounced his speech to be 'tip-top,' and declared to Charnock and Jack that he would go through the same labours and encounters again, if need were, to return so useful a gentleman as Councillor for the respectable ward of Mudlington. 'You see,' he went on, 'a row or two at an election-

time just rustles you up a bit, and keeps you in fettle ; if it war'nt for a flust now and then, we should get too good to live at our house.'

But there was singing, also, during the evening—solo-singing, duet-singing, chorus-singing, congregational singing. The members of a musical society connected with the school sang one or two of Handel's choruses with considerable spirit and vigour. But the solos of blind Ellen, and her duets with Margaret Maxwell, were the most attractive performances. The person who had been engaged to accompany them on the piano had been unable to attend ; and Miss Shorland sat down to the instrument in his stead amidst loud cheering. Working people, in towns like Yarndale, though somewhat rough and independent in their manner, are quick in appreciating a graceful act of that kind, which seems to bring rich and poor for a time to one social level. Ellen sang a couple of the most beautiful airs from 'The Creation,' carrying with her the admiration of the whole meeting, and not the least of Bess, who always stood up and watched her mistress when she was so engaged. As the clear, high-pitched notes floated round the room, old Sally, who had been dozing and mumbling a little sweet cake, began to awake and to look slowly around her, as though certain old memories of

the forgotten past were dimly reviving in some dusk corner of her mind ; and as the rich sweet strains flowed on in their sinuous course, she began to beat time unconsciously on the table with her lean fingers, and a tear fell on her withered cheek.

The last address of the evening was one delivered by Dolman. Being in training for the bar, speaking was no novelty to him ; neither did diffidence at any time stand in his way. He was an object of more than usual interest ; for some particulars had oozed out of the manner in which he had rescued Margaret Maxwell. He launched out somewhat unexpectedly into a lecture on parental duty. ‘ As I have been walking along the streets since I came here,’ he said, ‘ I have heard several mothers correcting their children in a very unseemly manner, scolding and abusing them in unbecoming language. You are thus setting them a bad example, and doing them more harm than good. If you are prudent, you will undertake the task of correction calmly and deliberately. Instead of throwing a stool at a child and accompanying it with coarse words, can you not address good advice to the juvenile offender, and, taking it on your knee in a meditative manner, manipulate some fitting part with discretion and effect ? ’

‘That’s the way I does, maester,’ shouted a little old woman with a very long face, whose chin rested on her bosom, and whose voice was of the shrillest treble ; ‘I uses a switch, and I al’ays—’ the rest of the sentence, which explained her system of domestic discipline and home rule, was lost in the laughter.

Dolman spoke of the great respect he entertained for the Rev. Mr. Monkhouse and Mr. Frederick Shorland, whom he had known intimately for some time, and he noticed the good they were working and likely to work in the neighbourhood. ‘Indeed,’ he continued, ‘I see with my own eyes a great change for the better in the locality during the last half-year. I don’t mean to say that Mudlington even yet is a garden of Eden, though I have noticed in it a Paradise Row (laughter) ; I doubt much whether, in case I should retire into private life, I should select it as my place of retreat ; but, from the exertions of Mr. Councillor Crumbleholme and my friends around me, it is undergoing a manifest improvement. (Hear.) Why, six months ago I had myself such an encounter here, in a place they call by some such name as Mount Pleasant, or Primrose Hill, or Angel Meadow—such an encounter as I should be very reluctant to engage in again. (Loud laughter.) Perhaps some of my opponents are

now before me, in a milder temper and in a better frame of mind.'

A voice : ' Betty Jenkinson and Mary Pomfret is here. Sally Jump is a Particular.' (Laughter.)

' I'm quite sure she's a Particular.'

Another voice : ' A Particular Baptist.'

A third voice (explanatory) : ' A dipper.'

' A dipper she is ; for she wished to dip me in the mill-pond. (Laughter.) But I expect we shall be better friends when we meet again. Under Mr. Monkhouses's ministry, you will think of something more useful than damaging a young gentleman's dress and trying to duck him into the bargain. To his charge I commend you very heartily ; and I am assured that if the clergy be sticks, as our friend somewhat unluckily laid it down, he will be found a good serviceable walking-stick for your support. (Hear.) In my native county two countrymen were heard in conversation. " What," says one, " is meant by this Visitation ? Dost know what it is, John ? " " Why," replies the other, " it's a meeting for these parsons to swop sermons at." " Well," rejoins the first speaker, scratching his head, " I wonder how it is, but our chap maistly gets th' worst o' th' swop." (Laughter.) Now I am quite confident from what I know of Mr. Monkhouse, that whenever he goes to these

Visitations, he will not in a general way come back with the worst of the swop.' (Loud laughter and cheers).

Before the meeting closed Mr. Jenkins proposed a vote of thanks to the Rev. Mr. Monkhouse for his conduct in the chair, and Mr. Corby seconded it: they spoke on the whole in a kind and genial manner. The vote of thanks was carried by hearty and unanimous acclamation; and the tea-party, which seemed to have given general satisfaction, closed with an appropriate hymn and the benediction. All the guests went away well pleased; and Mr. Scragson declared to Mr. Charnock that he thought he should come again when there was a similar gathering, maintaining his reservation however, that he should view the transaction in a business light. 'You see,' he added, 'it is a business-like as well as an entertaining way of spending an evening, and cheap into the bargain;—if I had gone out this afternoon in my dog-cart, or spent the night at a free-and-easy, it would have cost more than ninepence, you may depend—not to mention the headache in the morning.'

A manufacturing population is a hand-shaking population; and Mrs. Shorland on leaving had to encounter the greetings and hand-shakings of several old people in whom

she had taken an interest. She had a conversation also with Mrs. Maxwell, who came up to inquire how they all were at 'The Oaks.' Mrs. Maxwell felt proud that Miss Shorland should have accompanied her daughter's singing on the piano. 'You see,' she added, 'I've nursed them both, ma'am.' Old Becky Silcox, also, hobbled up to pay her respects. Becky was only a grumbling character, and had carried on for a long time a running quarrel with society in general and with the Union in particular. The guardians and relieving officers and all connected with the workhouse had a 'pick (pique) at her.' 'They give me,' she rambled on, 'only eighteenpence a week with some brown bread and bad tay—and me, ma'am, who have had a matter of eighteen childer! Poor folk are hardly dealt with nowadays; these Bastile-keepers 'ud stick us in our graves if they could; but I'll not dee to please 'em—and me, ma'am, who has had as many as eighteen childer! And, you see, I've to live in a garret, who've seen better days—owned property and kept a shop. But now, when a body's old, folk dunno' care a thimble-top for ye. As for these bits o' wenches, when their little fingers warch (ache), they can get tickets for the salt wayter and tickets for anything; but nobody cares for

an old cratur like me. And then, they've turned me out of my seat at the evening Service, and stuck a big fat man in my place; they say I hosts (cough) and puts 'em o' out (hugh! hugh!); I've had my host thirty year, and the poor-law doctor conno' touch it at o'—and me, ma'am, as has paid rates and taxes, and had a matter of eighteen childer?' Whether her children had done much good to society in general, we do not know; but the sentiment entertained by Becky is held by her class generally, and coincides with that of the Vicar of Wakefield, that they who have had the most children have done the State most service.

Before leaving the room, Graham introduced Dolman to Margaret Maxwell, thanking him for his chivalrous conduct on a late occasion. Margaret was a little confused at first, but Dolman laughed off the matter, said he should be happy to repeat the chastisement which was so well deserved, and branched off into other subjects. He complimented the two young ladies on their singing, and remarked to Miss Shorland, who was of the group, that she had not often the opportunity of accompanying on the piano such excellent voices.

'And how very tastefully your room is decorated,' he said to Ellen.

‘Yes, I have no doubt it is,’ she answered.

‘No doubt! we may see it is, plainly enough.’

‘I cannot see, sir; I never had the blessing of sight.’

Dolman had not remarked her blindness; he looked into her eyes, so bright, beautiful, and clear, and was almost ready to doubt her assertion. At a second glance, however, he perceived that she could not see; and he felt sorry that any casual expression of his should have called forth her observation and reminded her of her defect. He knew, at the same time, that the blind, as a rule, are not a discontented class, and mostly shrink from sympathy, so far as regards their deprivation; and he consequently made no apology for his remark.

‘Ellen,’ said Miss Shorland, ‘has an attendant here that never leaves her. Frederick and Mr. Monkhouse want to beg Bess, but Bess won’t leave her mistress; her faithfulness would shame most of the human tribe, Mr. Dolman.’

‘Gentlemen or ladies, do you mean?’

‘Why, both probably.’

‘May I try to beg her?’ asked Dolman.

‘You may have her,’ said Ellen, ‘if you can coax her away from me.’

Here Dolman patted Bess, and received in return a wag of the tail, as though she knew they were all friends together; but she did not of course leave Ellen's side. What a marvellous perception has the dog oftentimes of the good or evil purpose of the stranger towards those to whom it is attached! And Bess seemed by constant association with her mistress to have combined with the canine instinct an almost human faculty of discernment.

Monkhouse and Frederick Shorland now joined the party; and the former had perceived what had escaped the observation of the rest, that Ellen had been labouring under a slight cold and an uneasy cough during the evening. Her cheek, too, had been slightly flushed; but, in a complexion so fair, that might be accounted for by her exertion. Still, he recommended her to be careful during the cold weather, and to wrap up well when she had to pass from a warm room to the open air.

And all the while the stream of human beings—men, women, and children—was flowing out of the room, leaving it emptier and emptier, till, in twenty minutes from the benediction, it was silent, solitary, and dark.

CHAPTER IV.

A TEA-PARTY ON A SMALLER SCALE.

SIR TIMOTHY BRIERLY resided in the suburbs of Yarndale, in a house and after a style be-seeming a trusty knight of that city and an ex-Mayor of its Worshipful Corporation. His mansion was spacious ; his rooms were expensively furnished ; his greenhouse was well stocked ; his equipage was showy ; his livery was imposing. In Sir Timothy's domestic arrangements a critical eye might probably have perceived that the expense somewhat preponderated over the taste ; but the knight himself made no great pretension to refinement, and was quite content if only he could leave an impression upon the Yarndale mind that he was a successful manufacturer and a man of substance, on an average.

Not that the daily expenses of his household were great. They were only on an economical scale, considered relatively to his wealth and his knighthood. Indeed, it will be found generally true that they who as merchants or manufac-

turers have wrought out their own position, pay but little regard to indoor style, as an everyday institution. On show days they are showy; but ordinarily they veil their splendour and curtail their expenses. They cover up their drawing-room carpets with druggets and shroud their damask curtains in calicoes. The family dine at one in a homely way and on plain fare, awaiting the return of the master at six or seven to a substantial, technically called a 'heavy,' tea—one with solid cold meat, sometimes with hot joints. Our landed aristocrat prides himself mostly on his style, and, whatever be his fare, has a weakness for his well-arranged plate and his well-disciplined waiters. He feels with Caleb Balderstone, that the bell must ring for dinner and all the genteel formalities be observed, even though he has to sit down to a herring and the rinsings of the claret-butt. A Yarndale magnate, however, though not averse from display on high days and holidays, would have seen no wisdom in making a punctilious fuss, as Caleb did, over so scanty a meal; he would regard it as a foolish expenditure of power to make an exhibition of servants and plate over a dinner of cold meat.

On a certain evening soon after New Year's Day a small party were assembled round Lady

Brierly's tea-table. Dr. M'Thwacker and Mrs. M'Thwacker were there, and the remaining few who did not belong to the knight's family were connected, as members of Committee, with the school over which Miss Maxwell had presided. It may be inferred, therefore, that the guests had met for the twofold discussion of creature comforts and educational questions.

First, for the creature comforts, as being the most mundane subject-matter. The tea was of the description that has been alluded to, a 'heavy' or a 'thick' tea. As we said, it is not unusual in Yarndale for the family even of a knight to sit down to an indifferent and hasty dinner, and to wait till six or seven for the more substantial meal of tea. It was so on this occasion. The tea-table was heavily laden with good things; hot beef-steaks and mutton-chops, cold fowls and tongue, muffins and crumpets, sweet-cakes and preserves, tea and coffee in silver, were spread before the guests and arranged supplementally on the sideboard. It was a tempting banquet, and deserved the powerful but somewhat tedious grace that Dr. M'Thwacker pronounced over it.

Dr. M'Thwacker, to judge of him *à priori*, was fond of 'thick' teas, and had enjoyed many. His countenance was of that round,

plump, shining character which is indicative of an appetite for rich, tasty viands. Nor did his *à posteriori* performance at the tea-table belie the antecedent supposition. He ate of divers meats like a strong man, pouring out in the intervals of masticatory repose his oracular sentiments in deep-toned and graceful cadences,—which seemed very like sonorous platitudes, but which were listened to as maxims to be remembered. Mrs. M‘Thwacker was a lady of large corporeal proportions, silent and sleepy: she was an admirable wife for the doctor, as being a good listener and rendering a ready acquiescence to dogmatic teaching.

‘Sir Timothy,’ said the doctor, sententiously, ‘I cannot approve of that address which, as a member of the Corporation, you presented the other day to the magnate who visited our city,—it seemed to me an act unbecoming the liberality of our age and Council.’

‘Why so, doctor? We thought it graceful and becoming. Why not—eh? ahem!’

‘You know, Sir Timothy, that the great man whom you delighted to honour is the enemy of civil and religious liberty in his own dominions.’ Then casting his eyes round the table, as if to attract the attention of the ladies, he continued,—‘Civil and religious liberty, ahem! is human

nature's birthright; it is the greatest boon a good Providence can bestow upon a nation. Thought, conscience, religious profession,—why are they not free as the air we breathe—untrammelled as the mountain breeze—unfettered as heaven's sunshine?'

'Well, for my part, I don't think we have very much to complain of in our country, doctor, on an average,—let people say what they may,—not very much.'

'Permit me, Sir Timothy; I cannot agree with you there. Have we not a State Church weighing like an incubus on the nation? Are we not subject to the payment of Church-rates and Easter-dues, Sir Timothy, to the distress of every right-thinking mind and the harrowing of every tender conscience? Are we not confronted, wherever we turn, with a dominant Establishment and a proud priesthood?'

'Well, doctor, as far as I can see, we are not very heavily oppressed with such things. Few of us pay Church-rates or Easter-dues, and then it is of our own accord; and as for the State Church, it is a very tolerant Church, on an average, doctor;—my opinion is, if we let it alone, it will let us alone.'

Sir Timothy Brierly was at heart a man of kindly disposition and of a catholic spirit; and if he had not been brought up within a some-

what exclusive religious circle, he would have entertained an affection for all mankind—on an average. ‘In trade,’ he would sometimes reason with himself, ‘we are very liberal in our notions: I buy and sell with Church people, Greeks, Romanists, Jews, and Nonconformists; nay, I deal with Mahometans and Hindoos—for ready money, ahem!—and I find a fair amount of honesty in all, and not the least in Churchmen. I really don’t see why we should carry our sectarian jealousies into religion only, where we ought to be especially charitable.’ Such were the unbiassed reasonings of his heart; but the spring was checked and muddied before it had fairly welled out of its fountain-head. We might suppose that men in business—associating, buying, selling, bargaining, conversing, disputing, combining, one with another—would lose the angles of religious prejudice from the very force of attrition,—and this effect may perhaps be occasionally perceptible,—but it is undeniable that narrow-minded sentiments and bitter prejudices are often carried by men actively engaged in trade into their religious professions and practice.

‘Not heavily oppressed, Sir Timothy! Not, perhaps, in purse, but in conscience, Sir Timothy! Money is but a small matter—dross—metal—flimsy paper,—it is in the spirit, Sir

Timothy;—and when the spiritual part of a man is oppressed and overburdened,—that is the trial. Our fathers have bled for civil and religious liberty, and it is a noble cause to bleed in — a noble cause — worthy of the Christian martyr.’

As the doctor was laying in a stock of heavy food and wiping his mouth complacently, he seemed very like a man, who, if he had to bleed and suffer martyrdom, would prefer to do it by proxy, like one balloted for the militia, or a Chinaman.

‘I quite agree with you, doctor,’ said Mrs. Meikle, who had listened hitherto with attention. Mrs. Meikle was the lady of Mr. Councillor Meikle, a respectable flour-dealer and a zealous Independent—a man who had distinguished himself in the Town Council by some powerful speeches, — one especially on the paving question, in which he had minutely discussed the relative merits of Yorkshire sets, round boulders, and Welsh sets; she was some fifty years old, and dressed in colours so gay as to be somewhat in contrast with her pinched-up parchment features. ‘I quite agree with you, doctor. I’m in charity with all the world, I hope; but I have a bad opinion of these set-up Church-folks. It was only last week that Mrs. Jump, who washes for us, wished to get

her boy into the Blue-coat School; and they actually told her that he would be made to attend the parish church. Mr. Bolam, too, a good pious young man I know, applied for a schoolmaster's place in one of these Church schools, and they would not listen to him for a moment, Sir Timothy, because he could not in conscience join their services.'

'Well, I see nothing particular in that, Mrs. Meikle,' said the knight mildly; 'you know we should do the same.'

'Yes, but, Sir Timothy,' the lady retorted quickly; 'the truth is with us, Sir Timothy; we hold the faith in its truth—in its truth, Sir Timothy.'

'Possibly, Mrs. Meikle, others may think they do the same.'

'Yes, Sir Timothy, they may think they do, but they don't. Then, how these Church people put their ministers into Courts of Justice and toss them away like old shoes or petticoats. I'm in charity with all the world, Sir Timothy; but I've no patience with them—no patience at all—set-up, conceited things as they are.'

'I think, Mrs. Meikle, to tell you the truth, they allow their ministers more latitude than we do, or any other Nonconformist body would; but that, you know, is their own look-out and not ours.' Sir Timothy recollected, also, that

for the last two ministers in their chapel before Dr. M'Thwacker the place had been made too hot, because their popularity had waned; but this was too delicate a matter to touch on. So Sir Timothy changed the subject. 'By the way, doctor, they are asking me for a subscription to the new Church they are going to build in Mudlington. We have mills in the neighbourhood, you know. Can we conscientiously subscribe to it, think you?'

'Sir Timothy,' replied the great man, with solemnity, 'I never wish to interfere with freedom of conscience: in that case, you perceive, I should be contravening my own solemn convictions. But, in my opinion, a State Church is, in the first place, ungodly and unscriptural in principle; and, next, that it must be destitute of vitality and spirituality, and so be useless, if not worse than useless, in any neighbourhood where it is.'

'Yes, but, doctor, we cannot deny that they are building their churches in poor districts. You see, they throw it out against us that we carry our places of worship into wealthy places, and leave the poor folks to the Church, or to take care of themselves. That is not fair in them, I know,—still they are doing what they can among our working-people,—it may not be much,—but what they can,—and I can't believe

but that some good must come from their labours. They are very diligent, doctor—ahem! on an average—it can't be denied—very diligent—though they do not embrace the whole truth!’

‘They are on an unscriptural foundation altogether, Sir Timothy, and a blessing cannot go with them. They are fed fat with State patronage, and they carry on an unholy traffic in souls. They are next neighbours to Popery, too, in doctrine—the bark and the tree—the bark and the tree, Sir Timothy.’

‘Well, doctor, what you say may be true; I am not very well posted up in such matters: still, I think the Liberation Society is coming it rather strong. It is making unpleasantness among friends and acquaintances, and if we could sweep away Church endowments and confiscate them to the State to-morrow, I hardly think we should do much good, doctor.’

‘An ungodly bridal is that between Church and State,’ demurred the oracle; ‘the progeny must be illegitimate and unblest.’

‘Then you would not have me give anything to this new church, eh? Mr. Frederick Shoreland spoke to me about it one day on ’Change; and, in my opinion, his manner was somewhat too abrupt—too independent. He seemed to think that, as a millowner thereabouts, I was

bound to give even to a church and school in connection with the Establishment; and when I demurred, and said that it required thought, he walked off a little huffish, as if I was acting unreasonably. Shall we be able to get up a chapel there in our interest, doctor?’

‘That is entirely another question, Sir Timothy. We must view the question of your giving to this place in its abstract propriety or impropriety. Besides, have you not full scope for the streams of your benevolence within our own chosen vineyard?’

Sir Timothy was somewhat perplexed in the matter. His heart told him that he ought to subscribe for the sake of his workpeople; but then money-giving mostly requires an effort. Conscience says, yes; covetousness says, no; and then a battle ensues between them in the dark recesses of the spirit. Thus, while the contest was going on in Sir Timothy’s breast, Dr. M‘Thwacker, his conscience-keeper, stepped in, and raised his voice on the side of covetousness; so that the knight, without positively determining not to give a farthing, put the question away from him with the reflection, that if he buttoned up his pockets, he could not be blamed with any show of reason or justice.

‘Then,’ continued the doctor, driving the nail still deeper, ‘what blessing can rest on the

services of this State Church? A dull, humdrum form of prayer, priestly absolution, the *opus operatum* in baptism, popery in the Catechism and at the Lord's Table, something like blasphemy in the burial service, and at the ceremony for marriage unscriptural and unsuitable expressions.'

Here Miss Flintoff broke in. Miss Flintoff was a spinster of five-and-forty; she was tall, thin, and stiff; if you were to cut certain curves or undulations out of an iron lamp-post, you would have a fair section of Miss Flintoff both before and behind; her features were thin, and her nose was prominent and aquiline—all so like iron that they would apparently have served for the figure-head of a steam-ram. Her aspect was sour, supercilious, and contemptuous—indicating a sense of superiority over all the world but her own clique, and the greater portion of them. She had an independency of a hundred a-year, and plenty of time at her disposal to devote to works of charity and mischief-making.

'Yes, Dr. M'Thwacker,' said Miss Flintoff, very emphatically, 'I quite agree with you. I was a bridesmaid at Mrs. Bumstead's union—but I will never be present at that service again—never.'

'O,' interposed Sir Timothy, jocularly, 'when

you come to be married, Miss Flintoff, I dare say you won't object to a State service, though you mayn't quite like it, on an average.'

'No, Sir Timothy—never again—if I am led to the hymeneal altar, it shall not be in one of the State churches.' And she drew herself up like a person who was resolved to go through the process, when it came, with a conscience.

'Marriage,' said the doctor, 'is a civil contract, but it may be blessed by the addition of prayer and worship. Now, I think a blessing is more likely to descend from a religious service in our own places of worship than in the State churches. So far, I agree with our dear sister Miss Flintoff.'

'Well, well,' replied Sir Timothy, laughing off the subject, 'you shall be married at Sion Chapel, Miss Flintoff, and I wish you much happiness of it; but these things are matters of taste, you know—and ladies are somewhat fanciful on such delicate questions—matters of taste, and tastes are as variable as the prints and patterns we produce.'

To say the truth, marriage according to the ceremonies of the Church of England was a somewhat delicate subject among them at the time: indeed, the conversation thereupon had been carried on with a species of bye-play. Miss Brierly, it was expected, was soon to be united

to Mr. Jacob Shorland, and the problem was—where? Dr. M‘Thwacker, however, knew how far he could go; he was well aware that it was by no means safe for an Independent minister to tread too heavily on the toes of a wealthy deacon. Nor would Sir Timothy, with all his good nature, have permitted any intrusion into his family arrangements. Lady Brierly, too, who was not an ill-intentioned woman, and was a trifle more peppery than her husband, would have resented any attempt to interfere with the forthcoming marriage. Both the knight and his lady were proud of the anticipated connection. They had been hurt that Miss Shorland would not accept their son; but the union of Jacob and their daughter more than compensated the annoyance. Young Timothy could get a wife where he chose; he had but to hold up his finger for one; but it was not so easy a matter for a lady to catch a good husband. Then, Jacob was likely to be very rich; he was a first-rate man of business; he was kind and even-tempered; he was moral and religious; he had no nonsense about him.

‘So,’ said Dr. M‘Thwacker, after a short pause in the conversation, and a long grace on the removal of the china and the *débris* of hot steaks and cold fowls,—‘so, Miss Maxwell has

resigned her situation in the school, I hear.' This was really the question of the evening, on account of which mainly they had assembled; but the doctor seemed to take it up incidentally, as a mere matter of secondary importance; he assumed an air of indifference about it, as most people do when they approach a topic about which they are anxious.

'Yes,' replied Lady Brierly, 'we received her letter of resignation last week.'

'And, pray, what reason did she assign?'

'No reason whatever: she simply said that she did not intend any longer to retain the situation.'

'Yes, but she is bound by rule to give a certain notice before she can resign the place. I think, Lady Brierly, her behaviour is very unbecoming. My impression is, that we ought to teach the young woman that we shall not submit to her unseemly conduct, Lady Brierly.'

'I hope I am in charity with all the world,' interposed Mrs. Meikle—'with all the world,—but I never could bear that Miss Maxwell; there was something about her—I don't know what—something I could not make out—something I did not like. With all her quietness of manner, depend on it she has mischief underneath: still waters run deep, Lady Brierly—that is my opinion.'

‘Well,’ rejoined Lady Brierly, ‘I must confess to a sort of liking for her; she was always respectful in her demeanour; she kept her school in good order, and brought her pupils on very well; and she was liked very much by them. I am sorry to say, however, that by her hasty resolution she is giving us a deal of trouble.’

‘I quite agree with Mrs. Meikle,’ said Miss Flintoff in her stiff way. ‘I never could like that young woman. She is as high and dry as her State Church. I’m quite sure she’s a sly one underneath. These smooth-faced ones, who look as if butter would not melt in their mouths, are often no better than they should be in their hearts. It’s the pig that does not grunt that gets the best share of the trough.’

‘The truth is,’ replied her ladyship, ‘there has been something unpleasant, as we are informed, between Miss Maxwell and our Timothy. We don’t know quite what it is; but he wished to escort her on her way home, or something of that kind, and another gentleman would not allow him to do so. How it was, we don’t quite make out; but something disagreeable happened, and it has caused a stir. Since it took place, Timothy has been pelted with mud and stones, when he was in that neighbourhood; and a Mr. Graham has sent

him a sort of threatening letter. So Timothy has now gone away with his horses for a few weeks, and is taking a little relaxation at Melton Mowbray, where no doubt his health will be benefited by the change.'

'There it is!' exclaimed Mrs. Meikle.

'I thought so!' echoed Miss Flintoff.

'The smooth-faced minx has been trying to mislead and beguile Mr. Timothy,' asseverated Mrs. Meikle.

'The silly young designing creature has thought of catching your son in her net,' echoed Miss Flintoff.

'Did ever anybody hear of such a thing?' ejaculated Mrs. Meikle.

'Who could have imagined the impudence of the hussy?' echoed Miss Flintoff.

'I cannot say, indeed,' continued Lady Brierly, 'how it was; but, on the whole, I think we had better accept Miss Maxwell's resignation, and proceed to the appointment of someone in her place as soon as convenient. We could not do any good by trying to compel her to stay: she has many friends; the Shorlands show her attention; and we should only create confusion and increase the unpleasantness by attempting to stop her.'

'I think,' said Sir Timothy, 'Lady Brierly gives sound advice—such as we should follow

in business. A servant will do you no good who is like a dog tied up and ready to bite you. You had better look to a fresh appointment—no use in making a fuss where you cannot perhaps take action after all. Never bark when you can't bite.'

Both Sir Timothy and Lady Brierly had a strong conviction that their hopeful son had been doing something which would not bear exposure: so they wisely recommended that the matter should be passed over without further notice. 'You see,' the knight said to his lady in private, 'Timothy has been doing what he shouldn't, I am afraid. But young men will be young men; you can't put old heads on young shoulders.'

After a while the party assented to Lady Brierly's counsel, Mrs. Meikle and Miss Flintoff dismissing Margaret Maxwell with certain spiteful sallies which were not very complimentary to her domestic virtues, or to her moral character in general.

'On the whole,' propounded Dr. M'Thwacker, with his usual sonorous solemnity, 'I am not sorry, Lady Brierly. Miss Maxwell had strong Church prejudices—prejudices which were developing themselves more and more—and we could hardly have expected that blessing on

her labours which, as Christian people, we might desire. Now, in future, let us strive to select as teacher for that school one of our own denomination: unless we succeed in that, we cannot hope for good. If we get a Churchwoman, we shall have a teacher without that spiritual vitality which we long for; it is impossible to expect anything very good out of a communion where souls are bought and sold under State patronage and the sanction of the law. Then, if we have a Wesleyan—one from the Wesleyan interest—why, it is true, there is not in that denomination the curse of endowments, but there is no true gospel preaching. Arminianism is almost as bad as State Churchism. We shall never prosper as we ought, Lady Brierly, take my word for it, till we have a teacher for that school in full communion with ourselves.'

So the evening passed away. Before parting about ten o'clock, the guests had each some brandy-and-water, hot and strong, to fortify them against the cold atmosphere without. Dr. M'Thwacker mixed for himself a very jovial rummer; Mrs. M'Thwacker and Mrs. Meikle, being married ladies, took something warm and comfortable without much resistance; Miss

Flintoff submitted under protest and on much persuasion, and with maidenly bashfulness, to take 'just a sip' of brandy, with hot water and sugar, before encountering the cold outside.

CHAPTER V.

GRASSDOWN PARK.

GRASSDOWN PARK is a befitting residence for a hospitable gentleman with an unincumbered estate of thirty thousand a-year. It is a mansion the building of which commenced in the reign of Elizabeth, and has not at any given period arrived at completion. It has received additions, alterations, and improvements for centuries; it has experienced pullings down and buildings up manifold, according to the taste or purse of the proprietor for the time being; and now it is a structure of large dimensions, imposing appearance, and irregular beauty, with the orthodox number of wings, turrets, chimnies, gables, and oriel windows. It is in the midst of gardens, shrubberies and pleasure-grounds, which have expanded with the enlargements of the house, and upon which neither art nor money has been spared. And it is surrounded by a park that bears on its surface the dignity of centuries—that majestic aspect of natural grandeur which age only can

give; for, amidst all the advances of our time, no inventor has ever discovered a process for supplying forest timber in full growth ready to hand. Standing at the entrance to the mansion your eye stretches over lakes and woods, and through glades of rich pasturage interspersed with wide-spreading oaks and stately beeches, where the deer browses in quiet or canters lazily along, if startled by any sudden sound. There is an æsthetic association linked with these graceful creatures as they roam about in our ancient parks: they are a perpetual protest against the utilitarian spirit of our age; they are a relic of those times fast passing away, when our landed aristocracy lived as good old English gentlemen, willing to keep on their domains a herd of animals whose beauty alone would be a compensation for their food. What man who has made his fortune by turning over his capital with rapidity and to a large percentage, would encourage the breed of deer to devour his pastures and only to pay back an occasional haunch of venison as a return for their keep?

‘You are heartily welcome to Grassdown Park, young gentlemen,’ said Sir Richard Monkhouse to Dolman and Frederick Shorland, —‘I am very glad Charles has remembered the invitation I gave you at Warwick; he is, I

suppose, having some private greeting with Lady Monkhouse, for mothers, you know, must be mothers the world over; and Charles, being the youngest, was always a sort of pet.'

Sir Richard was a very fine specimen of an aristocratic country gentleman; though upwards of seventy, he was still hale and fresh-looking, like those who spend much of their time in the open air; he was tall and erect, with a slight tendency to stoutness of figure; with features yet handsome and hair almost white, he had a very pleasing aspect, tempering with amiability his habitual deportment of command. He was tolerably well read in the literature of our country; not that he had ever racked his brain over the subtleties of philosophy or the intricacies of invention or the mysteries of theology; but being of a shrewd mind, and having lived in the best society, he had acquired a fair amount of book knowledge. Then, he was conversant with the law of Quarter Sessions, at which he was a Chairman; he was not unacquainted with our laws generally, having been for many years a member of the House of Commons; he was an authority in all the details of practical farming, and could hold his own with tenant Jobson in discussing the merits of deep-draining, subsoiling, short-horns and Swede-turnips; he mostly

attended the meetings of the Royal Agricultural Society, and had written several treatises for its Quarterly Journal.

‘So,’ continued Sir Richard, ‘I suppose you two and Charles were college friends. I was myself at Oxford some fifty years ago; but there was not much reading going on then in the University. We dressed well, and lived luxuriously, and spent money; but I did not come away much wiser than I went. The world nowadays is turning round faster, and Oxford no doubt is more alive to her duties and responsibilities. But here come Lady Monkhouse and our niece Miss Woburn.’

Lady Monkhouse was more than ten years younger than Sir Richard, but did not appear to be as active and vigorous as he. She was somewhat stately in her carriage; but her disposition was kind and motherly.

‘Now, young gentlemen,’ said the Baronet, ‘lunch is announced; take out the ladies; you will want some refreshment after your journey. Have you seen, Charles,’ he continued, after they had taken their seats at the table, ‘whether your friends have been comfortably settled in their apartments?’

‘My bed-room and dressing-room, Sir Richard,’ rejoined Dolman, ‘are about three times the size of all the rooms I occupy in the

Temple; and they have much better fires in them.'

'The Temple rooms, I know, are not unnecessarily large; but then dark and dingy chambers are congenial with the habits and studies of you lawyers,—ha! ha!'

'We have no doubt to look much on the dingy side of human nature; we have to witness and to mix ourselves up with deeds of darkness, it is true—it is partly our vocation.'

'Yes, and you are lucky if you don't fall into the ways of the wicked by familiarity with them. There is danger lest in handling pitch you dirty your fingers—ha! ha!—is not that so?'

'To suppose the lawyer is worse than his neighbours, Sir Richard, is quite a popular fallacy. He is not liked generally, because he has to do painful things, and to drain people's pockets; but he has often to bear a blame which more properly belongs to his employers. He sees a vast amount of trick and fraud in others; but I do not think he is at all worse, as a rule, than the members of other professions: indeed, I am not sure whether he be not better.'

'Well, yes, there are some good and some bad among them, as in every other class. When

people abuse the lawyers, they intend it more as a joke, I dare say, than anything else. But, by the way, as a professional gentleman, you may be useful to us now. We have a trial on hand that is creating some excitement among us.'

'Is there much at stake, Sir Richard?'

'We are foolish enough to think so.'

'In which of the law courts is it entered, may I ask?'

'Well, sir, it is not so much a trial of law, as a trial of political strength. But I will state the case, as you lawyers say. As you perceive, I am getting into years, and each succeeding year after seventy does not add to a man's mental energy or bodily vigour. I have latterly begun to find the late sittings in the House tell on me,—it is no easy life, I assure you, if you are to do your duty faithfully to your constituents, that of a member of Parliament. I have latterly, too, felt occasional twinges of the gout,—taste that Madeira, you will find it good, though I do not suppose you have yet experienced a touch of the gout,—and altogether I thought it best to lay up—*Equum solve senescentem*—unharness the horse that is getting broken-winded; is not that what Horace says? Lady Monkhouse also pressed me very much to retire from the representation of the county,—and when you have been married forty years,

young gentlemen, you will have found out how prudent it is to follow the advice of your wives. Besides, I have enough to do on my own property and in county matters for a man of my age. So I accepted that mysterious office called a Stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds—a post which is not coveted by many. And now to the point. My eldest son has been fixed upon by the most influential landowners in the county to be my successor. Richard has been for some time in the Guards; but it is time that he should take his part in national politics. Well, gentlemen, would you believe it?—when we thought everything secure,—when we had not the least suspicion that any opposition would be started,—when we were all at our ease—a stranger puts out an address, gets a committee together, and starts a kind of canvass. By-the-bye, he is a Yarndale merchant and manufacturer, I understand. Perhaps you may know him: his name is Bullivant—I think that is it.'

'Yes,' said Shorland, 'I have a slight acquaintance with him: he is of the firm of Bullivant, Millingham and Pope. He is a man of advanced political opinions and an unflinching dissenter.'

'That no doubt is the man. He lives at a place called Smalley-Brook, does he not?'

‘I believe he does: it is the same person beyond question.’

‘Well, gentlemen,’ continued Sir Richard, maintaining his good humour,—‘we are rather indignant that this Mr. Bullivant should come here to create a disturbance. Excuse me, sir,’—to Shorland—‘I have no prejudice against manufacturers and merchants, to which body you belong—they are a very useful class. I had never any mean jealousy of them; for they have promoted largely the prosperity of our country, and the landed and trading interests are bound up together. But we wondered what business Mr. Bullivant had here. If he had wished to represent Smalley-Brook, or some manufacturing town thereabouts, I should not have said he was out of place; but when he comes from such a distance, at the expense of some Association, seeking the representation of our county, and not possessing an acre in it, he shows himself to be a man of considerable assurance. Besides, I have another charge against him,’ added Sir Richard, smiling,—‘he murders his h’s.’

‘Why,’ said Lady Monkhouse, laughing, ‘a man may have sound sense, you know, and not always catch his aspirates.’

‘Well, well, that is possible; and we ought not to lay too much stress on small matters;

but when folks come out of their places to be annoying, they must expect to have remarks, sometimes not very complimentary, made on their displays. These trips of the tongue are trifles, I know, in comparison with the weightier matters of sound judgment and strict integrity; and if Mr. Bullivant had acted modestly, nobody would have remarked on them. Such men, however, rarely get on in the House; their efforts have the effect mostly of creating amusement for the young and thoughtless class of members there.'

'How is it, sir,' inquired Shorland, 'that our men of business so rarely succeed in Parliament?'

'If you are to attain to any eminence in the House of Commons, you must begin early, and devote yourself entirely to your object. No one can employ the greater portion of his time in commercial or professional pursuits, and then hope with any reason to win his way among our legislators, who generally devote their whole energies to their work.'

'I really wonder, Sir Richard,' said Dolman, who was beginning to feel himself refreshed after his journey, 'how that unlucky "h" has ever got into our language, or at any rate why it is sounded. It is only expressed by a sign in the Greek, and in the Latin it is mute.

It seems to have settled into the English, as the round towers have into Ireland, to puzzle people. Is there any relation'—to Charles Monkhouse—'between the letter "h" and that mysterious digamma about which we have heard so much and understood so little?'

'You will excuse me,' replied Sir Richard, 'but a vast deal in life depends on small things, as you are no doubt aware. It may be foolish in the abstract to raise such little matters into importance; but in some things it is almost safer to break the law of the land than a law of etiquette or conventionalism. So that, at the bar, you must mind not only your "p's" and "q's," but your "h's."'

'I presume,' said Shorland, 'that Mr. Bullivant has no chance whatever for the county?'

'No, I do not suppose that he will really go to the poll,—though, of course, we cannot be sure of that. He seems to have come on a mission to enlighten our dark minds here. Such men as Bullivant are always missionaries of something; they have a call to preach some doctrine,—in other words, to be troublesome to everybody around them. He is a member of the Peace Society, and seems willing to fight any one who crosses his path out of the mere love of fighting; he is born to separate Church and State, and as one of the Liberation party

he would turn his own minister out of chapel and home if he opposed him; he talks about primogeniture, and, like the most of his class, he will leave nine-tenths of his capital to his eldest son, with the provision that it must continue in the concern; he harps upon the old bugbear of protection, and would persuade the farmers that they are an ill-used race, from the oppression of their landlords and the injustice of the game-laws, while he is putting the screw on his workpeople at home.'

'Are you satisfied yourself, sir, with the game-laws?' inquired the son.

'Ha! ha! You are growing radical in Yarn-dale, I fear, Charles. The question of the game-laws is a very difficult one, I acknowledge. The poacher has the sympathy of many: I have generally found him to be the scamp and terror of a neighbourhood. Still, I consider the preservation of game, to the extent some carry it, to be a great evil. It is a gross injustice to the farmer and a powerful temptation to the idle vagrant. To preserve game in moderation is not objectionable to the tenant; it keeps all prowlers off his land, and adds to the peaceableness of a neighbourhood. The question of the game-laws is a difficult one, no doubt; but whatever evils spring from them are owing

mainly to the inconsiderateness of game-preservers.'

'You will have fought through many elections without question, Sir Richard,' said Dolman; 'the present one will be considered a very small matter.'

'Yes, I have been engaged in a good many electioneering contests in my time; and I have known the day when there was a kind of excitement not altogether unpleasant in a fair stand-up fight for the representation of a constituency. Perhaps you would have no objection now in your fiery youth to engage in such a struggle; but I am not what I was, sir, forty years ago. The severest contest I ever had was when I was first returned for this county. I had been a borough member for several years before,—it was when the whole kingdom was shouting for "the Bill, the whole Bill, and nothing but the Bill." I stood in the Conservative interest, and our side won; but, I assure you, in those days of brickbats and bludgeons, it required some pluck to do battle for your cause. It was Greek meeting Greek with a vengeance. Elections were then carried on with broken heads and bloody noses: they are now conducted with rose-water and eau-de-Cologne.'

‘Then, you see after all some improvement from the Reform Bill, sir?’ inquired Charles.

‘Radical again, eh? Why, yes,—it has its advantages and its disadvantages. We have not had the same order of men in the House since it was passed, and the system of governing by parties has been greatly shaken; but, on the whole, the affairs of the country are administered in a business-like way, and a manifest injustice in the mode of representation has been remedied. I am beginning to think, gentlemen, after all our measures—Catholic Emancipation, the Reform Bill, the removal of the Corn Laws, and such-like—I am beginning to think that our English Constitution is so expansive, our English sense so sound, and our English spirit so conservative, that the nation will hardly suffer damage whatever law is passed. But, come,—the days are short: take another glass of Madeira; and we will have a ride out while it is light. You will have no objection, I dare say, should your horses be brisk and lively: I content myself with a steady, safe-footed cob that plays no pranks.’

So the party rode out, to take a survey of the surrounding country, and to inspect, in passing, certain agricultural operations which one of Sir Richard’s tenants was carrying out on some new principle.

‘Look here,’ said the baronet to Shorland, who was riding by his side—whose knowledge, by the way, of the various kinds of soil was about equal to his knowledge of the agricultural system pursued in the moon,—‘look here—see the effect of draining on that land; it was a miserable, poor, rushy plot that would have starved a peewit; but it has been deep-drained, subsoiled, cropped, and laid down with permanent grass-seeds,—and you see, sir, it is as good a pasture as any in the county. Nothing pays a better interest than the land, if it be well treated. Stay, let me see,—perhaps your fifty per cent profits in trade beat it.’

‘Does your own farming pay, Sir Richard, if I may venture to ask? I have heard that gentlemen farmers do not increase their property much.’

‘Perhaps, my young friend, we must not look too closely to our balance-sheet. We are somewhat too expensive in our systems; we experiment too much; but then we are advancing agricultural knowledge. Prize cattle are not the most profitable; but they tend to improve the breed generally. Look, sir, at those cows! My tenant Jenkinson prides himself on his stock, and they are a fine-looking dairy. Why, forty years ago the breed of cattle was rough, and leggy, and scraggy,—almost as primitive

as in the days of the ancient Britons; it had neither shape nor quality.'

'Quality, Sir Richard?'

'Yes, quality,—it did not handle; you know what it means, when applied to cotton; you can tell its quality by the touch. So with cattle; we can discover by the feel whether they are likely to fatten and thrive.'

'The science of farming has naturally kept pace with every other.'

'Just so: since I can remember, turnips were hardly grown; now our turnip crops are magnificent—a necessary produce in the course of good husbandry. But here is the tenant—a very respectable and intelligent man. How are you to-day, Mr. Jenkinson?'

'Very well, I'm much obliged to you, Sir Richard,' said the stout, burly farmer, touching his hat; 'will you go into the house and rest for a short time, sir? Is not this Mr. Charles? Bless me! how you are changed to look at, sir!'

'Clerical cut, Jenkinson, you know—white neckerchief, double-breasted waistcoat, and all the rest of it—and these Yarndale fogs don't seem to have brought the colour into his face. By-the-bye, speaking of Yarndale, I hear there have been canvassers flying about the country,—have they called at your house in their movements?'

‘Ha! ha! ha!’ the farmer broke out into a jovial laugh,—‘yes, two men called, and met me at my door here. One was a jerking, snuffling kind of fellow, who must be, I think, a methody person on furlough; he talked about conducting the election on Christian principles, and asked me to vote for Bullivant on Christian principles. He threw himself into an attitude, and stretched out his arm, and turned up his eyes, and was declaring that whatever he did, he did on Christian principles,—when some of our people—I don’t know who, Sir Richard—opened the window above very quietly, and dashed a bucket of water—very dirty slops, Sir Richard—right down on his head. He was very angry indeed, as he sputtered out a mouthful of the mucky wash, and he began to threaten us all with the bottomless pit, just as if he carried about with him the key to it,—but I stopped his preachment by letting my oak stick clank on the ground not far from his toes, and telling him that unless he took his dirty carcase off, I should think it a Christian duty to let him feel its weight, just by way of an experiment.’

‘Too bad—too bad, Jenkinson,’ chuckled Sir Richard; ‘don’t you see that an assault has been committed; and if the culprit is brought up before me, and it can be proved against him, I shall have to punish him, friend or foe?’

‘Ha! ha! ha!’ continued Jenkinson, ‘I can’t say who it was that did it, nobody can tell; it may have been by accident, it may have been the cat,—but it happened just at the right time, that’s all I can say.’

The baronet rode off shaking his head, but laughing withal.

‘It seems, Sir Richard,’ said Dolman, as the party were riding along, ‘that even nowadays elections are not won and lost altogether with rose-water and eau-de-Cologne.’

‘Ha! ha! ha! not exactly. The canting, hypocritical humbug, whoever he be, to come to my tenant, and try to preach him into giving his vote against me on Christian principles! I am heartily glad he got his dowsing of filthy water; but, you see, as a Justice of the peace, it would not have been right for me to have said so.’

‘Why,’ said Shorland to Charles Monkhouse, as they were riding together behind the other two,—‘this canvasser can be no other than our old friend Jenkins, with his Christian principles.’

‘How on earth should he get here?’

‘Don’t you see? He knows Bullivant, and has come up with the party—perhaps with some plausible purpose, perhaps to gain distinction for himself, and to enlighten the rustics by his speech-making.’

‘I am afraid he has not met with much encouragement from Jenkinson; but he is a persevering man, and may find openings for his ability. We shall probably see him in his element before long.’

‘But leaving friend Jenkins,’ continued Shorland, ‘who, may I ask, is Miss Woburn? She seemed to be a very agreeable person from the conversation I had with her at lunch. Is she a cousin?’

‘She is a very distant relative,’ replied Monkhouse. ‘She is the daughter of an Admiral Woburn, who was third or fourth cousin to my mother. He won some honours, I believe, and died at last, leaving his daughter penniless—a girl of fifteen. My mother received her; and from that time she has had much comfort in her society, and found her a valuable assistance in all her duties. She has always been regarded with affectionate respect by all at the house, and she deserves it. She is not particularly handsome, and certainly she has no money in her own right; but she has better properties, in a very intelligent mind and a very amiable disposition. So now you know the history and character of Maria Woburn.’

CHAPTER VI.

THE ELECTION.

CRAMFORD is a county town, and like most county towns besides, dull and drowsy. It vegetates in a half-torpid state through the main portions of the year, occasionally rubbing its eyes and making an effort to awake. Every market-day it indulges in a mild septenary yawn, but like the sluggard soon relapses into 'a little more sleep, and a little slumber, and a little more folding of the hands to sleep.' When the assizes are held within its precincts, it gathers up itself for an effort, and looks somewhat brisk and bustling, even though these railways have sadly cut down the High Sheriff's attendant equipages and his retinue of javelin-men in regimental uniform. When the Council elections are going on, it seems to be pretty nearly awake, even in a November fog; at that time, there is an abundance of scandal and personal animosity flying about, together with pots of porter and noggins of rum. When the representation of the Borough or the County is

contested, it stretches itself out rather powerfully, and begins to think that something is to be done,—what, it does not exactly understand; till, at length, it becomes fairly aroused by lively skirmishes, broken heads, and politicians noisy in their drink. On the whole, however, the life of Cramford is a somewhat negative one—not unhappy, but divested of the intensities. Around the door of the linen-draper in the market-place the gentlemen of the town assemble at about eleven o'clock in the morning, to ‘ventilate’ the news of the day, arbitrate on any matters of local interest, and discuss small pieces of scandal that are current; at fixed times, certain of the citizens assemble at certain hostelries, famous for their ales and liquors, to mingle their politics with their pipes and potations; the tradesmen take business easily, polishing their door-posts with their shoulders, lifting their goods on to the counter with a lazy *nonchalance*, and sending in their bills once a year. And why should they not do so? It is pleasant to contemplate such a Borough as Cramford in these days of frantic excitements and delirious revivals; it is agreeable to reflect that, in the words of the old song, ‘there is peace to be found in the world,’ in times when steam and machinery and railways symbolise, if they do not exemplify, perpetual motion. By

contrast, look at the bustle of a commercial and manufacturing town. See the anxious faces of the people ; consider the wear and tear that are going on in the human machinery ; calculate how much that engine called the mind and that passenger or luggage-train called the body—in other words, the whole plant, mental, moral and physical—are suffering by the never-ceasing strain, and how soon they are likely to be laid up as worn-out stock. Your thorough business man knows no rest : his delight is in ‘ turning over ’ everything, especially his stock-in-trade ; dead capital he abhors, as nature does a vacuum. Sometimes he hits his mark, sometimes he misses : now he ‘ turns over ’ his goods to an advantage, again he ‘ turns over ’ himself to a disadvantage. And so he goes on in an unceasing round of buying and selling, rolling up property like a cotton ball, till a certain unwelcome skeleton beckons him, and he steps out of his counting-house into his coffin.

On the morning at which we have arrived in our narrative, Cramford was aroused to its highest degree of a waking condition ; it was lashed up into a tolerable pitch of excitement. When, a month previously, it had been authoritatively declared that an election would shortly ensue, the announcement created but a slight sensation ; it only aroused a few hungry

lawyers and ragged letter-carriers, who looked for some casual pickings from the event: almost all concluded that a contest was out of the question, and they looked forward to the return of their member as likely to be made up of some hundred men in procession followed by about as many straggling boys and girls, a few inferior speeches by orators with coughs and blue noses on a frosty morning, and sundry dinners and strong drinks to counteract the cold without. But, lo! while that division of the county was taking its ease, and expecting an electioneering contest as little as an earthquake, one morning it found itself speckled over its whole surface with coloured placards, on which was a vigorous address propounding ultra theories and bearing the signature of Josiah Bullivant. Next appeared on the stage a posse of his supporters from Yarndale and the manufacturing districts—energetic, bustling men, who expressed supreme contempt for pedigrees and coats of arms, treated Lindley Murray very cavalierly, and associated everything mean and illiberal with the idea of a bloated aristocracy. They scarcely expected to win the day; but, being expert agitators, they hoped, as emissaries of the Liberty, Peace, and Commercial Prosperity Association, to lay a platform for future operations. They had,

moreover, enlisted on their side some iron-masters, manufacturers of earthenware, and general tradesmen from various parts of the county; so that, when they burst suddenly on the Cramford division with a flood of oratory, promises, placards, and pamphlets, the district might have been a middle level, and they might have been some tide bursting its embankment, and threatening to inundate the country. The landed gentry awoke, stroked their chins, and pulled up their cravats, in a frame of mind between amazement and indignation; the tenant-farmers stared to see the yellow placards on village walls, and here and there on their own barn-doors; Cramford pricked up its ears; the politicians that assembled round the draper's door warmly canvassed the address of Josiah Bullivant, some saying that it was a hoax, others with a wink declaring that they knew better; groups gathered round the mural literature which is always so plentiful and edifying at an election-time; and all, like wild asses of the desert, snuffed the coming tempest.

On this morning Cramford was not only thoroughly awake, but full of life, for it was the day of nomination. Flags were flying out of public-house windows—flags of various colours, and bearing each some party device, such as ‘the Constitution in Church and State,’ ‘Uni-

versal brotherhood and peace,' 'Free Trade and Commercial Prosperity.' Country gentlemen were driving into town in their gigs, having wisely left their carriages at home; farmers were jogging in on horseback or in their whitechapels; numbers were flocking in on foot. Cabs and coaches were in rapid motion here and there, nobody knew whither, some bearing the inscription, 'Monkhouse and the Constitution,' others, 'Bullivant and Freedom of Election.' Crowds were loitering about the doors of committee-rooms, and pressing into and out of houses of entertainment, within which landlords, landladies, and servants were rushing about frantically. In the market-place stood groups of burly farmers, mostly in drab breeches and leggings, wielding thick oaken cudgels, and occasionally rapping them against their stout calves; here and there were rough-looking fellows from iron-works and potteries, apparently brought on to the ground for warlike purposes; and up and down were scattered hundreds of lookers-on, who had come to join in the bustle and amusement without any definite purpose; strong bodies of police might have been seen quietly stationed in by-places and inn-yards; the Mayor, Aldermen, and Common Councillors of the Borough were moving about in their private capacity, and

assuming individually an aspect of unusual importance ; and for once at any rate Cramford was in a state of intense wakefulness.

What a mixture of fun and fury is there at an election-time ! Anxiety and jesting, wealth and poverty, meet naturally on such occasions, the fraternisation ending either in rough mirth or bloody noses, as the case may be. On this morning a cab of somewhat pretentious aspect, containing a stout, respectable-looking personage, was moving leisurely down the main street of Cramford. The occupant was a quiet, unobtrusive archæologist, who had come to inspect the celebrated church of the county town. He had a portfolio with him for his sketches ; and, being quite ignorant of what was going on, his head no doubt was full of the various styles of architecture—Norman, Gothic, Early Perpendicular, Early Decorated — of mouldings, capitals, mullions and corbels. Now, whether it was that his portfolio was taken for a blue-book, or supposed to contain copious notes for a speech of which he was travelling, it suddenly got noised abroad that the placid antiquarian was no other than Mr. Josiah Bullivant. Crowds rushed round him ; some of the most impulsive took the horse out of the cab, and dragged the ecclesiologist *nolentem volentem* in triumph to the market-place, when

they lifted him out of the vehicle and placed him on the fish-stones, that he might deliver to them an address. The stout gentleman, not knowing what the proceeding meant, and being much out of breath with the pulling and hauling he had gone through, was naturally in a considerable state of bewilderment, much like a fat frog when it is first emancipated from its bed of coal, and begins to wake out of its long sleep, and finds itself in a new world. By-and-bye, however, the frog begins to hop about; and, in like manner, the archæologist soon recovered his consciousness of existence, and awoke to the exercise of his faculties.

‘Gentlemen, I protest—’

‘Hoorah! hoorah! hoorah!’

‘Hear thee, Dick,’ said a sadler to a blacksmith, neither of whom worked for Grassdown Park—‘dost hear, Dick?—he protests—that’s the chap for my ticket—that’s the boy for us.’

‘Permit me, my friends—’

‘To be sure—yes, yes!—hoorah! hoorah! hoorah!’

‘What a voice!’ said a tinman, who was a singer at a dissenting chapel—‘why, it’s like a horgan with diapason swell on.’

‘He’s a voice like a lion,’ chimed in his friend; ‘he’ll let ’em know what’s what i’ th’ Parliament-house.’

‘I hope you’ll kindly let me—’

‘Aye, aye, that we will—hoorah! hoorah! hoorah!’

And so the dialogue proceeded, the stout gentleman trying to speak in a voice that really was rather weak and husky, but never completing a sentence from the cheering and noise; till the crowd had borne him on their shoulders to the Royal Hotel, the knowing ones declaring that they had never heard so grand a speech as he had made, and predicting that, when he was in the House of Commons, he would ‘show them a trick or two.’

‘Now, by all that’s wonderful and unexpected!’ exclaimed Shorland to Mr. Jenkins, both of whom had been attracted to the spot by the forcible capture and detention of the antiquarian—‘by all that’s wonderful and unexpected! what brought Mr. Jenkins to Cramford on this stirring occasion?’

‘Take care, sir, take care,’ replied the little man, who was in a state of intense excitement; ‘swear not at all. Can you by swearing add one stature to your cubit?—one cubit, I mean, to your stature? Swear not at all.’

‘Well, to meet you here is enough to extort involuntarily an exclamation of surprise. I suppose you are labouring in the righteous cause of Mr. Bullivant, of the firm of Bullivant,

Millington and Pope, eh? Is not that the case?’

‘And are not you, sir, up here for the same purpose?’

It is rather singular that, when we are engaged on some special mission, we fancy that all the persons we meet are on the same errand as ourselves. The purpose has so firm a hold on our will for the time being, that it gives the same colour as itself to every casual thought that passes through the mind.

‘No, no—not so; I am quite contented to allow Mr. Bullivant to sink or swim on his own merits. I will not be one of his bladders. I fancy, however, from all I hear, that the principles imported by Mr. Bullivant from Yarndale will not find much acceptance, to use a common phrase with you, in this division of the county.’

‘That is not improbable—nay, very probable. From what I have seen of the farmer class, they are a soulless lot—a soulless lot. Yes, sir, when I was impressing the truth upon one of them—enlightening his dark mind to a sense of duty—some one of the family—I could not learn who—threw a pail of water, dirty water, over me; and when I demanded reparation and denounced such conduct on Christian principles, the big bully of a farmer threatened to break his stick on my back, if I did not walk

off. A soulless lot, sir—soulless animals ; they have no more heart vitality, sir, than their own pigs.’

‘ But, Mr. Jenkins, I always thought you had taken a view in politics opposite to that of Mr. Bullivant. You profess to be a Churchman, and he openly avows his wish to destroy the Church altogether. He is for universal suffrage, universal freedom, universal everything. I did not know that you had become so complete a universalist.’

‘ You mistake, sir, as you often do : you do not look at things in their true light ; you view them with the secular eye and through worldly spectacles. The object you look at is the same ; but you may look at it from different points of view. If you walk round that Town Hall, for instance, you see the same Town Hall wherever you are, but you see it in different shapes and forms. Now observe’—holding up his forefinger—‘ it is just so with me in political matters. My politics are ever the same, but I regard them from different points and under different lights. If you take a globe of glass filled with red fluid, you see different colours as you view it all round. It is just so with me. Church and State are the same ; but I look at them from different points of view. What matters the connection between the two, if

there is vitality in the Church? And I think we are more likely to see it arousing itself like a giant, if its hands are no longer fettered by state cords. To tell you the truth, I never liked your richly-endowed parson. More money, fewer graces. He looks down on his people. I think so, and my minister at Yarndale thinks the same. Then Mr. Bullivant advocates the cause of teetotalism; and have you yet to learn how many evils spring out of intemperance and riotous living? Commercial freedom and prosperity, again, are our watchwords; and, as a consequence, universal peace among the nations of the earth. Why, sir, if these are not politics on Christian principles, I know not what are. If we can carry out our views, it will bring us to the Millenium by a short cut, when "the lion will lie down with the lamb, and the child will lay its hand on the cockatrice' den, and the bear will eat straw like an ox, and a sucking calf shall lead them"—ahem!'

Mr. Jenkins had been speech-making laboriously for the last few days, and the above manifesto was a compendium of all he had said. On that morning he had addressed several groups of stragglers on these subjects, and among the rest he had enlightened a score of school-children, who had a holiday, on the millennial reign.

‘But what has brought you here,’ he continued, ‘if the question is not an uncivil one?’

‘I am staying at Grassdown Park with the Rev. Mr. Monkhouse, whom you have seen.’

‘What! is he related to Sir Richard Monkhouse?’

‘His son, and he is brother of the member that is to be.’

‘Ah! that’s what I expected—all as poor as church mice, or your friend would have never come to Mudlington. Pride and poverty!’

‘Well, do you not say, “the fewer the guineas, the more the graces”? As for Grassdown Park, all I know is that there is plenty to eat and to drink there, Mr. Jenkins.’

‘Very likely—revelling and riotous living go along with mortgages and debt. Pride and pedigree—debt and ruin—all in a heap.’

Shorland had lost the irritability he once felt when conversing with Mr. Jenkins: he had begun to consider him rather as a subject of idiosyncratic study,—as an anatomist would regard a dead body on which he is exercising or going to exercise his dissecting powers. He did not, therefore, attempt any reply; nor would it have been availing if he had; for Mr. Jenkins, seeing an opportunity for improving the occasion, as the ecclesiologist was borne

in triumph into the 'Royal,' edged his way through the crowd, mounted the fish-stones, threw himself into an attitude, began to gesticulate powerfully by way of muscular exordium, and then launched out into a spirited oration. As Shorland moved away he heard cheers and shouts of laughter from the people; and he caught occasional words from the speaker, such as universal peace and prosperity, teetotalism, religious vitality, and the millennial reign.

As eleven o'clock approached, the hour fixed for the nomination, ladies began to appear at the windows from which the hustings might be seen. They for the most part exhibited the Blue or the Monkhouse colour, and seemed ready to welcome him and his party with the waving of their scented pocket-handkerchiefs and an occasional flag on a small scale. Captain Monkhouse was a decided favourite among them: he was a handsome bachelor of thirty—tall and well-formed, more attractive in ladies' eyes than his clerical brother, but with fewer of those distinctive traits of countenance that attract the physiognomist. He was a good horseman, and he never appeared on horseback but when well mounted. He was moreover courteous and affable to the fair sex, as becomes a gentleman: at county balls and

such-like assemblies he had not confined his attention to the county families, but had danced and chatted with the wives and daughters of tradesmen, and had bowed or spoken to them afterwards if he had met with them. It may be conceived, therefore, that he was an admirable canvasser and a popular candidate. Without any striking mental capacity, he was easy in manner, refined in thought, and honourable in feeling, — characteristics which are always pleasing, and which sometimes leave upon the mind of an observer an impression that greater intellectual powers are associated with them than is really the case.

For Mr. Bullivant the ladies generally expressed great contempt. Why could he not have remained at Smalley-Brook and Yarn-dale, they asked sneeringly, superintending his calicoes and spinning-jennies? Then there was nothing prepossessing to their eyes in his appearance or that of his attendant clique. They wore ill-made clothes, and had no manner. They were bold and presuming, trampling on county prejudices and ridiculing time-honoured modes of thought. Mr. Bullivant himself was a butt for the light arrows of feminine sarcasm. He was below the middle height, round and corpulent in figure, and he

waddled in his walk, owing to a want of correspondence in the architectural structure of his legs. His face was fat and red, and his hair was very white, straggling, and abundant; so that, looking out with a fierce countenance from the side decorations of bushy snowy whiskers as well, he resembled some wild animal that had grown old but had not been tamed by years. Mr. Bullivant was very choleric—‘sudden and quick in quarrel’—as all men are of his aspect. A physiologist may discuss the why and the wherefore, into which ‘causes of things’ it would be inconsistent with this narrative to enter; but it may be laid down as a proposition as universal as any proposition can well be, that whenever you meet with a man whose face is very red, and whose hair is very bushy and white, you find him to be of a fiery and passionate temper.

A few minutes before eleven the two processions might be seen wending their way to the hustings from their respective hotels. The members of the Blue party were numerous, and had an air of gentility about them: Mr. Bullivant’s following, it must be admitted, was less aristocratic in aspect and bearing. Among them Mr. Jenkins was a somewhat conspicuous figure, bustling about, talking, and gesticu-

lating. He seemed to rejoice, as he generally did, in the strife and contention that was thickening around him; and, while he foretold the millennial reign as a prospect not far distant, he was ready apparently in the mean time to fight manfully for the truth, and to wield the carnal weapon on Christian principles.

Mouthenden De Bracy Mouthenden, Esq., of Mouthenden Hall, was the proposer of Captain Monkhouse. The ancestors of Mouthenden De Bracy Mouthenden, Esq., had come over with the Conqueror; and the present representative of the family, while denied the knightly form and towering stature, retained all the hauteur and dignity of his Norman ancestry. He was a little man with a bald head and a short neck, and it is to be feared that he would have fared badly at the battle of Hastings or in one of the tournaments of ancient chivalry; but the spirit, sir, was there; and, if Sir John Falstaff be an authority, it is that which constitutes the man. Mouthenden De Bracy Mouthenden, Esq., did not admit into the category of gentleman any one who had not in himself and in his ancestry trod his own soil for a given number of generations: he measured the man by his quarterings; he

tested all his faculties by his blood and pedigree. It may be easily conceived, therefore, how contemptuously he regarded this invasion from Smalley-Brook, and with what a mixture of scorn and indignation he looked upon Mr. Bullivant in particular. Now, as Mouthenden's glances were reciprocated by Bullivant, and as Bullivant's gestures of contempt were hurled back by Mouthenden, it seemed fortunate that a railing separated the two: physically and constitutionally they resembled each other very much, though the one was descended from a Norman knight and the other cared not who was his grandfather. After all, then, is it worth while projecting a corporeal relic of knighthood through thirty generations, with a vellum pedigree and a dozen Herald's College quarterings on his back, when you find him, after so much fuss, no better than a cotton-spinner who was born perhaps in an attic?

Mouthenden De Bracy Mouthenden, Esq., commenced with a panegyric on his man, not only for his admirable qualities and peculiar fitness for the position of a county member, but for his long line of progenitors—a characteristic, after all, which belongs to most men. 'What the Latin poet,' he continued,

‘said of old is true now, and runs throughout creation :

Fortes creantur fortibus, et bonis :
Est in juvenis, est in equis, patrum
Virtus ; nec imbellem feroces
Progenerant aquilæ columbam.’

This quotation was followed by a variety of uncomplimentary remarks from the audience. ‘None of your Popish Latin,’ shouted one; ‘talk in English, old wheezy,’ roared another; ‘is your neck as long as your pedigree?’ inquired a third; ‘go it, old neck-or-nothing,’ was the encouraging advice of a fourth; all which jeering salutations were intermingled with loud laughter. Mouthenden De Bracy Mouthenden, Esq., not having been trained in early life to receive such greetings with a patient and acquiescent demeanour, began to feel the blood coursing warmly over his bald head, even though the thermometer was nearly at freezing-point, and he had almost worked himself into a passion for the sport of his foes. But he restrained himself, and glanced off from the qualifications of Captain Monkhouse to the British Constitution, which his candidate was going up to Parliament to defend. He enunciated the usual stock-in-trade eulogiums on that much-enduring entity, and declared, with three slaps on his breast, that

‘so long as his heart beat and the life-blood flowed along his veins he would stick by the Constitution.’ (Shouts, ‘you’ll stick by your own with your fur tippet, old never-sweat!’— ‘What of that lad’s constitution you sent to prison for catching a rabbit, old Jeffreys?’) By this time Mouthenden De Bracy Mouthenden, Esq. was fast losing his temper and charity; he was losing, too, which was almost as bad, the thread of his discourse. He had consequently to refer to the notes which were in his hat. ‘Is thy larning i’ thy hat?’ shouted one: ‘no, it’s in his yed with hat on top of it,’ bawled another: ‘aye, there’s summut brisk running in his yed; see how he scrats it,’ suggested a wit. Finding it, however, of small use to hold a dialogue with his opponents in the crowd, he turned round to the Bullivant party, and attacked them with much asperity. ‘What right or reason is there,’ he inquired indignantly, ‘in these men coming from Yarndale and Snawley-Brook, or Scrawley-Brook’—emphasising the word through his nose—‘to disturb the peace of our county without the smallest chance of success?—members, as they call themselves, of the Peace Society which is to bring in universal brotherhood. (‘Hear, hear,’ nasally from Mr. Jenkins.) Who are they, I should like to know, who

would come here to propagate their pernicious theories? Let them scrawl back to Scrawley-Brook as they came, scrawls as they are; and they will find enough to do in superintending their white slaves and spinning-jennies without disturbing a quiet county. (Great uproar, and menacing gesticulations from the Bullivantites.) Gentlemen! free and independent electors! I do not hesitate to express my indignation at this incursion of marauders—this raid of freebooters—this invasion of fillibusters—this—this—ahem!—this army of locusts brought by an east wind.’ Here Mouthenden and Bullivant shot their glances at each other, burning and intense as though concentrated through the lens; fierce retorts passed and repassed across the barriers between the partisans of each candidate; and whoever looked down among the crowd, he might have seen sundry eddies and surges made up of human figures, as though the result of unusual pressure and of opposing forces. Clenched hands were swinging about and oaken cudgels were falling heavily on obstinate heads; one agriculturist was on his back exhibiting a pair of top-boots considerably higher than his head, while two or three of his class were working like Nasmyth’s hammers on certain unfortunate pates they held fast in chancery; a few hats were crushed down and

coats split up ; beaten combatants were crying out for fair play, and the victorious ones were striking out ruthlessly ; the shouts of the combatants rose above the voice of the orator, and diverted attention from the conflict he was gathering round himself. So, Mouthenden de Bracy Mouthenden, Esq., seeing the occasion to be a convenient one for closing his speech, proposes as a fitting representative for that division of the county, Richard Monkhouse, Esq., of Grassdown Park, commonly called Captain Monkhouse.

The seconder of young Monkhouse was a retired clergyman of position in the county—the Rev. Clarence Twistleton, of Twistleton Manor. He was rather prolix, and occasionally glided off into the peroration of an old sermon, wherein he exhorted the hot-blooded pugilists to love as brethren ; but his address was opportune, and had the effect of restoring something like order.

When the Rev. Clarence Twistleton had ceased, Jasper Spinks, Esq., stepped jauntily forward to propose Mr. Bullivant. Mr. Spinks was a retired tradesman ; he had amassed a fair fortune in Yarndale, as a tailor on a large scale, and he had purchased a small property near Cramford, on which he lived in genteel style. Jasper, however, was rather looked down upon by the country gentlemen ; and though

he conversed with them at the cover side and subscribed to the county pack, he was not allowed to approach within a certain distance from the aristocracy. Occasional remarks were thrown out behind his back in the hunting-field in which allusion was made to a certain tailor that was bound to Brentford; and one sarcastic squire, seeing how awkwardly he sat on his horse, declared that he must have acquired his seat on his own goose. Jasper, however, was well satisfied with himself, and he came forward in a self-complacent manner to introduce Mr. Bullivant to the electors of that important division of the county.

‘In introducing Mr. Bullivant to you,’ he said, ‘I shall not, like Mr. Mouthenden, enter into the question of pedigrees; a long string of ghosts in the shape of ancestors is well enough as a subject for the imagination to dwell on, but no man is really a button-top better or worse for them: besides, has not one person really as long a pedigree as another throughout creation? I bring Mr. Bullivant before you as a hard-working merchant, the maker of his own position. (Cheers.) I cannot say of him as of the pale lily (A voice: ‘He’s loikener th’ colour o’ mangol oozel’), that he toils not neither does he spin’ (Another voice: ‘If he spins no better yarns at Scrawley-Brook than he does

here, he'd better have tarried there.') Here Mr. Spinks began to find out that the facetious style would hardly pay, and to be a little disconcerted at the failure of his points; so he took up the question of British liberty in a serious mood. 'Mr. Bullivant, gentlemen,' he continued, 'is the defender and advocate of liberty—liberty of conscience, liberty of commerce, liberty of the subject, liberty in everything over the wide world. ('Aye, liberty to lick his own white nigger.') 'Liberty, gentlemen, is a plant—a plant of steady growth.' ('So is a cabbage.') Mr. Spinks felt this to be a personal reflection, and his facetiousness and good-temper began to ooze away. He charged those who interrupted him with a mean attempt to put down freedom of thought and discussion. 'But,' he proceeded savagely, 'I will speak my mind in spite of you; I heed you no more than so many geese in your farm-yards.' (A voice: 'Why haven't you brought your own goose with you?') Another: 'He left it on the shop-board at home.') Jasper Spinks, Esq., was now coming off second best, as most people do who have to contend with a multitude: so, in order to escape from his dialogue, he, as many have done besides, fell foul on the British Constitution. Here, however, he did not fare much better; for the crowd, having once 'established

a raw,' determined to keep it open. Little fragmentary pieces of counsel of this kind were fired at him in volleys—'What have you to do with mending the Constitution?' 'Stick to patching old breeches, and never mind patching the Constitution'—all which were followed by peals of laughter from lungs of bucolic capacity. So that Jasper Spinks, Esq., having passed through many phases of feeling in his speech, sank at its close into a state of complete prostration; and, thanking the assembly for the patient attention they had accorded to him, he concluded by proposing Josiah Bullivant, Esq., as a fit and proper person to represent that division of the county.

Of the speech of Mr. Bullivant's seconder it is impossible to give even a condensed report. He twisted his features and chattered for a few minutes in dumb-show, and then sat down under the impression that his words had carried conviction to the minds of the large crowd that was before him.

Captain Monkhouse got through his part very creditably: he made no pretension to oratorical gifts, but he touched on the salient topics of the time in a sensible, practical manner. When he stepped forward the ladies from the balconies waved their cambric handkerchiefs and blue flags, and the farming

interest was vociferous in its cheers. During his speech, however, he met with frequent interruptions from the potters and navvies who had come to be the representatives of trade. He was greeted with kind inquiries of this kind: 'Who cut your whiskers, young man?' 'Are them mustarchers nat'ral articles?' 'Does your mother know you're out, my boy?'—but like a good tactician he did not notice them, and kept his temper. He concluded by expressing his conviction, that they who had come so far to oppose him would return like a dog with its tail between its legs, 'ignominiously defeated.' (A voice: 'Well licked, you mean,' and loud cheers.)

Mr. Bullivant rose in a passion—an unhappy frame of mind for an electioneering candidate. For two hours he had been listening to contemptuous reflections on himself and his principles. He, Mr. Bullivant, who had three thousand human beings in his employment—was he tamely to submit to such impertinence? Then, he was assailed with cries which did not tend to allay his irritability. 'What brought you here, old turkey-cock?' holloaed one: 'speak up, Bubble-and-squeak,' shouted another: 'draw it mild, Bully,' roared another: 'hop the twig, and be off, thou owl in the desert, thou,' bawled another. He had, more-

over, a glass of colourless fluid before him—most probably water—which gave rise to many rough jests. ‘Let us have a taste of your whisky,’ was the polite request of an Irishman, in the brogue of his native isle. ‘Get along with you,’ vociferated a neighbour; ‘he’s a tee-totaller, and going to give us a lectur’.’ When he frequently drank of the liquid, he was affectionately reminded, that if he didn’t stop, he’d ‘burst th’ biler.’ Then, the action of the fluid on his utterance was unlucky. Every draught he took was followed by a series of gentle atmospheric resurgences, some of which divided a word into syllables, while others helped him to an unconscious aspirate. His speech embraced a wide range of topics, but the *lucidus ordo* unfortunately did not shine through it. He bundled up together in one parcel, as he would have described it, bullion, the ballot, cotton twist, India, and anti-state-churchism. He expressed his contempt for pedigrees in general, and begged to ask Mr. Mouthenden how far his genealogical tree went up beyond Adam and Eve. He reproached the landed gentry for their former opposition to free trade, and declared that they were as narrow-minded as ever, if they dared to speak out. ‘Did you ever,’ he asked with great animation and emphasis—‘did you ever know a hoak grow

into a hash ?' (Laughter, and a shout : ' You're making a hash of it, anyhow, old Billyroller.')

Mr. Bullivant then spoke of the freedom of election, and denounced the landlords for the tyrannical thralldom they exercised over their tenants. He declared that his majority would be overwhelming, if the farmers were their own masters. ' Go for the ballot !' he exclaimed. ' Go home with you to Scrawley-Brook,' was the response. ' You're led, like your own horses, to the poll,' he shouted. ' You're a nigger-driver yourself,' was the retort. ' You are driven to vote as you drive your pigs to the market,' he bellowed. ' You have got rich on the slavery of women and children,' was the reply. Here, a youthful agriculturist had planted a battery at a window not far from the hustings ; and his first discharge was that of an egg, well directed, somewhat unsavoury, which lighted on Mr. Bullivant's collar, smashed, and streamed down his clothes, carrying with it his own party colour of yellow. His friends pressed round him to wipe off the splash, and of course made matters ten times worse. ' Keep up thy heart, old Bullyrook,' some one shouted, amid laughter ; ' thou'rt coming out wi' flying colours.' The dialogue was already warm and somewhat personal ; the practical jokes were becoming disagreeable ; and it was

clear that a storm was likely to burst somewhere. There was a surging of stout farmers towards the hustings, and there were demands, expressed in a loud tone, that 'the pig should be pitched over the railings.' The High Sheriff hereupon requested Mr. Bullivant either to be moderate or to cease, and intimated that, if he preferred to go on in the same strain, he could not protect him from violence. Mr. Bullivant, accordingly, drank off his glass, and brought his speech to a close, not quite at ease as he saw the threatening attitude of the burly agriculturists before him.

As Mr. Jenkins was returning with his party to the Hotel, he received an ovation which confirmed him in the impression that he was doing good. A silly lad called 'daft Joe'—a character such as is found in almost every small town—having listened to him on the fish-stones, enrolled himself among his followers, and coming up to him slapped him on the back, saying at the same time in a loud voice—'This is th' chap for us: he's bringing in th' millinery reign, when there'll be plenty of buttercakes and plenty of beef and plenty of beer, an' nuffin to do—nuffin but to ate an' drink an' play on tambourine'—an art in which Joe delighted to exercise himself. With such a complimentary greeting he took Mr. Jenkins by the arm, and

walked up with him to the Hotel, when the waiter refused him admittance.

In the course of the day an address was issued by Mr. Bullivant, in which he expressed his intention of withdrawing from the contest—adding, however, that, if it had not been for the undue influence exercised by landlords over their tenants, he should have been returned by a large majority, and recommending the ballot as a panacea for every ill in life, from aristocratic coercion to the cow-pox.

CHAPTER VII.

A SPORTSMEN'S BREAKFAST.

IT was an ancient theory that the world was carried on by means of an unceasing alternation between the two opposite principles of generation (*γένεσις*) and decay (*φθορά*). English society, in like manner, seems to be kept together by an easy oscillation between the points of combat and reconciliation. Now that the election was over, approaches towards an arrangement of differences succeeded; and, as the Monkhouse family were victorious without a struggle, they could afford to be magnanimous by stretching out the hand of fellowship to their opponents and striving to allay any irritation that had manifested itself. Invitations were accordingly issued from Grassdown Park for a ball of unparalleled magnitude, including aristocracy and shopocracy, husbands and wives, sons and daughters, tories, whigs and radicals. Of this fête the description must be postponed to a succeeding chapter: in the mean time, by way of sequel to the Election, Grassdown Park was the scene of another species of entertain-

ment as attractive to country gentlemen as is a dance to their wives and daughters.

A winter's morning in the country is not without its beauties, though they be less cheering than those of spring as she develops her reviving energies and walks forth in her awakening strength. There is always a sombre look about leafless trees, torpid verdure, and bare hedge-rows: still, as the sun struggles through the haze of a Christmas morning, and the natural sharpness of the air is tempered by a radiance, clear if not warm, there is something invigorating to those who are sound in health and strong in the exercise of their limbs.

On the morning when there was to be a 'meet' near Grassdown Park, the sun shone out early, the harbinger of a clear dry day: its rays diffused but little warmth, but they spangled the woods of Grassdown Park with myriads of glittering gems, spreading over the nakedness and desolation of the landscape a starry mantle of various and brilliant colours. The slight rime that covered the woods and hedge-rows soon melted, glittered, and passed away. The frost, if perceptible at all, had been too slight to prevent 'the meet' on that day. And now, around that mansion, an exhilarating scene meets the eye. Elegant equipages are driving

up the avenue and setting down their occupants, —equipages of all kinds, from the dashing Stanhope with its high trotter to the easy two-horsed carriage with ladies reclining in it at their ease. Then cast your eye down the slopes of the park, and what numbers of noble horses do you see snuffing the air and pawing the ground, led by their neatly clad grooms. And now you mark approaching the pack so celebrated in the county, attended by the middle-aged, weather-beaten huntsman and his whippers-in, each and all of the party, human and canine, seeming to understand thoroughly the nature of the work that was before them.

Behind the mansion of Grassdown Park, there is a great bustle in the court-yard and around the stables. Grooms and coachmen and footmen are there,—some hurrying about, some loitering along, some standing with their hands in their pockets; and from the way they are passing into and out of the house, it may be inferred that there is no lack of refreshment in the servants' hall. Presumptive evidence of this may be deduced, too, from the fact that as they emerge from the door, they seem to be better fortified against wind and weather than as they went in.

‘Why, Jim, th’ Guv’nor is for carrying off the brush to-day, by your having two horses

with you. What's the odds he does't get spilt?'

This was said by a smart groom of some county grandee, with a cockade on his hat, to the servant of Mr. Jasper Spinks; and as servants weigh themselves in proportionate scales with their masters, the remark was made in a tone of condescension. The aristocratic grooms of the hunt regarded Mr. Spinks as a sort of interloper; and when one of them admired his well-fitting buckskins, another suggested that he might have made them himself on the natural block.

'Spilt?' replied the other rather indignantly; 'why spilt? He's more likely to see th' end on't than your fifteen stone-er.'

'Well, never mind who's split, so as we ar'nt,—but that's a tight little nag there, and a clipper, I warrant,—why have you brought out the old horse as well, this morning?'

'If you're so uncommon curious, I'll tell ye. Master has a friend staying with him from Yarndale—a sort of election friend like—as never was outside a horse afore—and he's just riding to the cover to see the hounds throw off,—that's it. He's but a rum 'un to ride,—if the old horse but switches his tail or lifts up his quarters a single hinch, he'll be found between his ears.'

‘I’ll tell thee what, Jim;—them Yarndale chaps should stop at Yarndale a minding their mills; whether they come here a ’lectioneering or a hunting, I wish they may lose.’ So saying, the smart groom stepped lightly into the house with a consequential air, and commenced a vigorous onslaught on a pork pie and a flagon of old ale.

The person described above as a ‘rum ’un to ride’ proved to be no other than Mr. Councillor Jenkins. As an old friend of Mr. Spinks at Yarndale he had been his guest at and since the election. After much ado he had been persuaded to come out and see the hounds ‘throw off.’ Mr. Spinks offered to place him on a quiet old horse which had pranced and pulled in its younger days, but had settled down into a seriousness consistent with that of its proposed rider. But how get the little man on to its back? He was full of activity and energy, as usual, but putting his foot in the stirrup from the wrong side he found himself on the saddle with his face towards the horse’s tail. On a second trial, however, he got seated in the orthodox fashion. ‘Don’t be afraid,’ said Mr. Spinks to him by way of encouragement,—‘don’t be afraid; he’s as sure as the Bank of England and as sedate as a parson,—a child may ride him.’

On this morning the large dining-hall of Grassdown Park presented an animated aspect. The room itself was very spacious and lofty, with heavy oak panels and large oriel windows looking out on to one of the lawns: it had an antique appearance with its quaint furniture, medieval specimens of art, and full length portraits of cavaliers, patriots, warriors, and ecclesiastics. It was only used on state occasions, and would have looked somewhat comfortless if occupied by a small party, notwithstanding the large fire-places which cast out abundance of flame and heat. But now it exhibited a cheerful and lively spectacle; it was well filled with about a hundred-and-fifty gentlemen in hunting costume, who were engaged on their breakfasts in a deliberate and business-like manner. There was no lack of creature comforts befitting a pre-equestrian meal: neither was there of appetite, to the observation of a stranger. The sturdy squire, the hunter of many seasons, was almost rivaling Dugald Dalgetty in his capacity for the 'provend;' the gentleman farmer was reducing the cold round of beef, not forgetting the tankard of October; the youth of fashion, with a more delicate appetite, was making a game pie or chicken his choice. The nervous rider was priming himself, now and then, with a sly glass

of maraschino, or curaçoa, or cognac ; perhaps, most of those vigorous Nimrods took a thimbleful of some liqueur before they left the room, just to keep the cold off their stomachs ; and especially did the strong ale, fifteen years old, cheer the hearts of the agricultural class. Conversation was going on after a rough and ready fashion,—mostly on the manly exercise of hunting in general, and on the prospect of the day's sport in particular—here and there on the late election and its accessories : occasionally you might have heard the friendly joke followed by the hearty laugh from well-strained lungs : indeed, so far as buoyant animal spirits and a freedom from all restraint and formality constitute happiness, that which philosophers call the *summum bonum* of life seemed to be distributed very largely among the guests.

‘Good morning, Mr. Spinks,’ said Sir Richard, holding out his hand to him ; ‘I am glad to see you here ; I wish you good sport for the day.’

‘Thank you, Sir Richard ; but are you not intending to join the hunt ?’

‘I will go with you to the cover side on a sure-footed hack ; but a man should give up field sports at seventy, Mr. Spinks. Besides, if I am too old for a member of parliament, I am too old for a Nimrod, I think.’

‘We are all sorry you should have to resign your seat,’ said the little fussy gentleman; ‘we were very well satisfied here as things were; but you see, Sir Richard, our Yarndale friends have strong political views and are always wishful to propagate them.’

‘To be sure—to be sure—an Englishman’s privilege everywhere. I have contested elections when they were tougher and rougher affairs than they now are; but, after a fair stand-up fight, win or lose, I never allowed myself to be disturbed by reminiscences. I should have been glad if you could have brought Mr. Bullivant with you this morning.’

‘Mr. Bullivant, Sir Richard, left soon after the nomination. He took his departure by no means in a good humour. He is a very worthy man—very well-meaning—an excellent man of business—one who has risen by his own industry and merit—but he has not learned to control his temper. He is too excitable for a candidate, I admit. Some of our manufacturers, though estimable men—very estimable men indeed—get into a manner somewhat too imperious—certainly too imperious—I suppose from having the control over so many work-people.’

‘A very foolish thing, indeed, to lose your temper at an election—lose it anywhere else

rather—for you not only fall into mistakes by it, but you get laughed at into the bargain. But the contest to-day will not be for a seat in Parliament—it will be for the brush; and on this occasion, Mr. Spinks, I wish you every success.'

While this interview was going on Shorland and Charles Monkhouse were in conversation with Mr. Jenkins at no great distance.

'We are glad to see you here, Mr. Jenkins,' said Monkhouse; 'a little country recreation will do you good. The friction of a Yarndale life in a Yarndale atmosphere will wear down an iron constitution. I hope you are making some stay with Mr. Spinks.'

'Recreation, sir, did you say?' replied the little man, stretching himself upward and stroking his chin with an air of dignity, as he stood in the midst of the aristocratic red-coated assembly, 'recreation, did you say, sir? It is not for recreation alone that I left Yarndale; I came into these parts to do my duty as a Christian man, and to speak a word in season to unenlightened minds.'

'You made a convert, we are told, of daft Joe,' interposed Shorland.

'I am not sure whether Joe is not wiser

than many of his neighbours,' retorted Mr. Jenkins.

'But are you not out of place at a hunting breakfast?' Shorland continued, who was ever ready to tease him. 'What would your minister say, if he saw you riding after hounds?'

'I am my own judge, sir, of what is right. Being the guest of Mr. Spinks, he wished me to accompany him—which I have done after many heart-searchings. Is it not the duty of a Christian man to watch the vanities of life, wherever he may be, that he may be the better qualified to reprove? Does it not belong to a prudent man to examine all kinds of society, that he may store himself with knowledge, and arm himself with weapons of offence and defence? Who, unless he had witnessed it, would have expected to see more than a hundred men in red coats assembled to kill a fox—in red coats, sir—the colour that is worn by the lady of ill fame in Babylon, sir? We must see the world, sir, to know the world,—is not that acting on Christian principles?'

'Really, Shorland, you have no business whatever to inquire why Mr. Jenkins is here,' said Monkhouse; 'we are all very well glad to see him; he has come to see what is to be seen;

but probably, like myself, he will consider the diversion of hunting somewhat too light and frivolous to be followed by serious-minded men. If I could entertain Mr. Jenkins here, while the gallant Nimrods are pursuing their sport, I should be glad.'

'I am much obliged,' replied the little man condescendingly, combing his hair upwards with his fingers as he spoke, 'I am much obliged; but I promised to ride with Mr. Spinks to the place where they—where they—'throw off,' did he call it? My friend Spinks, I fear, has become a little worldly; in Yarndale he was a deacon in Lady Huntingdon's connection, and now he follows the hounds in a red coat, buckskin breeches, and top-boots.'

During this colloquy, while Mr. Jenkins was jerking himself about and gesticulating energetically, several of the guests, having finished their breakfasts, were examining him with critical eyes, as microscopists would some fresh form of organic nature—all wondering how on earth such a quaint specimen of humanity should be found at a hunting breakfast. 'Will he follow the hounds?' asked one in an undertone. 'He's fitter to sit cross-legged with his thimble and scissors,' said another. 'You don't know,' observed a third, rubbing his

whiskers with the handle of his whip ; ' there's pluck in the little fellow, and he may prove a clipper for all his queer looks.' ' I'll venture a fiver on the lively grig ; there's mettle in him, depend on it,' added a fourth. And, all the while, young Mouthenden, the *spes gregis* at Mouthenden Hall, was taking a silent inventory of Mr. Jenkins's dress through a glass fixed to his eye, sipping at intervals his curaçoa, and marvelling ' how Charles Monkhouse had picked up the acquaintance of such a funny fish.'

But now there is a general stir throughout the hall. Sir Anthony Hazlerigg, the master of the hounds, who has been seated on Lady Monkhouse's right at the head of the table, rises, shakes hands with her Ladyship, and retires ; then, the rest of the company stretch themselves, and after paying their respects to the ladies, saunter after him in search of their servants and horses. A few loiter behind a moment or so, ' just to take another glass' of maraschino or stout ale, as the weather was sharp and the run would be severe.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE CHASE.

Do you wish to regard hunting philosophically or practically? If in the former light, the conclusion of your syllogism will not be in its favour. What possible use—what possible enjoyment—can there be in following a certain number of hounds which are in trained pursuit of a worthless fox? What possible love can you have for running the chance of breaking your neck at any moment? Does this recreation rise higher in the scale of action than that of a child following a butterfly? Mr. Shorland, senior, would place it a degree lower. Does it evince as much intelligence as that interesting game of croquet, at which some bishops are said to be scientific proficient? Does it come up to the standard of cricket, which is a game requiring a combination of muscular power with manual skill? Does it reach the dignity of billiards—a game now brought to such a state of perfection—one which must require in a proficient marvellous quickness of eye, extreme delicacy of touch, and

rapid forethought? Chess advances much further into the category of the intellectual.

On the other hand, hunting, considered practically, has its peculiar attractions; or, why should men rise from their warm beds on a cold winter's morning, and ride fifteen miles to a cover? But why argue on the matter? Whoever have been accustomed in any degree to the exercise of hunting—and we know that judges of our land, eminent lawyers, philosophers, and literary men, have enjoyed the diversion—all must admit that there is something extremely exhilarating in it, whatever the man of serious thought and profound reasoning may say to the contrary.

Tell us, then, in what the delight of hunting consists. Well, to find yourself at a cover side on a fresh cold morning, on the saddle of a first-rate horse which feels all the pleasant excitement you can feel—to listen to the ringing ‘gone away,’ as it echoes through the wood—to hear the horn calling the dogs on to their track and pace—to start on your gallop with the cry of hounds before you, a cry which, from some undefinable agency, would inspirit even a monk—to increase your speed till the pace gets pressing and the cold air comes sharp on the face—to clear hedges, ditches, fences, brooks, rails, with well-sustained grip, delicate touch, and accurate

balance, every feat being the test of a skilful hand and the evidence of a triumph over obstruction,—well, moralize as you please, there is something about this vigorous burst after the pack which, as it cheers the heart and sets the blood careering warmly along the veins, gives an appetite for dinner and makes a man at peace for a time with all the world.

No sooner had the guests left the breakfast-table, well fed and in full vigour, than they leaped lightly on to their steeds, when the huntsman with his whippers-in called the pack together, and all was ready for starting to the appointed cover. Mr. Spinks sprang gaily upon his saddle. Mr. Jenkins's mount was a more tedious affair. He was in popular phrase 'getting a leg on' from the groom amid a suppressed titter; when, lo! who should appear before them but daft Joe in a huntsman's old cap, holding the fragments of a veal pie in his hand and wiping his mouth with his sleeve after a hearty draught of ale. Joe was a well-known character at such gatherings, occasionally receiving a lash from some impetuous horseman, which he returned with savage oaths, and sometimes a penny or sixpence for opening a gate at the request of a timid rider, which he acknowledged with many thanks. He had a wild delight in listening to the music of the horn and hounds, and from his

knowledge of the country would often on a dull-scenting day keep pretty well in sight of the pack through a great part of the run. On seeing Mr. Jenkins, he was in an ecstasy, and claimed acquaintance with him as a prospective benefactor. Mr. Spinks, who was near, was rather scandalized at his familiarity, thinking it derogatory to his red-coat and top-boots to be thus accosted; but Joe would not be thrust off so contumeliously.

‘That’s th’ chap,’ exclaimed Joe, ‘as is to bring in th’ millinery reign, when there’ll be plenty of ale’—here he wiped his mouth—‘and plenty of pie’—here he took in a fresh mouthful—‘and nuffin but hunting and playing tambourine.—Come, Guv’nor’—to Mr. Jenkins—‘pick us a penny to begin with.’

The Councillor had no particular wish to part with a copper to Joe; but he had been all along troubled with a penny-piece, which, being in his coat pocket, had pertinaciously got between his saddle and his trowsers; so, glad to get rid of it, he complied with Joe’s request, and still further crept into his affections.

‘Don’t be afraid of my horse,’ he said on making the donation, for Joe, seeing the rider’s loose hand and uncertain seat, was reluctant to approach very near him—‘don’t be afraid of my horse, good man.’

‘Noa,’ replied the other—‘noa—I amno’ afear’d of your horse, but I’m nation feard, Guv’nor, of mysel’.’

‘H’m! I thought so!’ mused Mr. Jenkins—‘there’s more wit and common sense in Joe than some people fancy.’

And now horsemen and hounds have arrived at Coppledale cover. Sir Anthony Hazlerigg is giving his directions—a hardy-looking man of twelve stone, with a keen eye and a certain sharpness of speech—sitting loosely on a stout thorough-bred, which has never failed him. Some hundred-and-fifty horsemen are scattered around mounted on the noblest of steeds, which seem to understand their business, and to enjoy the prospect of sport equally with their masters. The hounds are rustling about in the cover, and, as a favourite one gives mouth, the riders within hearing gather up their reins, and rise on their stirrups, as if expectation were on tip-toe. Some begin to gather towards a certain point where the fox, if there be one there, is likely to break away, somewhat to the chagrin of Sir Anthony, who fears that they may obstruct its egress, and is beginning to be a little testy. ‘Keep back, gentlemen,’ he shouts; ‘where’s the hurry?’ Sir Richard Monkhouse is on a stout hunter, which he calls his hack; and, though he only came out to see the start,

he has now made up his mind to venture on a short burst. Joe mingles with the crowd, and picking up a half-smoked cigar, consumes it to the end, strutting about, and looking as important as its original possessor.

‘Grand scenting morning, this!’ said Joe to Sir Richard, handling his cigar like an exquisite.

‘Pretty good, Joe,’ replied the baronet good-humouredly.

‘Christmas time, Sir Richard,’ pleaded Joe, extending his palm.

‘But I hear you’ve deserted our colours at the election, Joe. How is that? You used to wear our ribbons.’

‘Why, I’ll go, first, for that little chap as ’ll bring in th’ millinery reign.’

‘What is the millinery reign, Joe? Is it petticoat government?’

‘Dunno’ know for that—it’s nuffin to do and plenty to ate—that’s th’ little fellow, see—after him, I’m for you—Christmas time, Sir Richard.’

‘Which will you have, then?’ asked the baronet, holding in his hand a shilling and a penny.

‘Why,’ replied Joe, who had a little of the knave in him mixed with a good deal of the fool—‘why, I’se not be greedy; I’ll take lesser ’un.’

‘Come with me,’ said Captain Monkhouse to his neophytes Dolman and Shorland, moving a little forwards, ‘and do not leave me far in the run. Unless you stick pretty close to me, you will be thrown out in a country of which you know nothing; but from my acquaintance with these parts I shall be able to choose a tolerably good line.’

No sooner has the Captain given this good advice to the two novices, than there is a loud ringing cry of ‘gone away,’ which sets the horsemen in motion. They that have not taken up a good position hasten to the spot where the fox has broken cover; they that are near the place settle down into an easy gallop; the leading hounds are dashing along in full cry at the pace of a racer, while those which have been less lucky at the start, are threading their way among the horses and exerting their strength to reach the leaders of the pack.

‘I declare,’ said Captain Monkhouse to Dolman and Shorland, after they had been some five minutes at vigorous work,—‘I declare we will get you two to ride at our steeple-chases you go so well—only humour your horses here—the soil is rather heavy—if you take too much out of them now, you cannot get them round again.’

Captain Monkhouse gave the two this

excellent advice, observing that their blood was getting rather too hot : perhaps his recommendation was not altogether disinterested, when he looked at the two-hundred-guinea horse on which each was mounted.

In about ten minutes the hounds came to a check ; many of the horsemen had already tailed off, for the burst had been sharp and telling ; but Dolman and Shorland had kept pace with Captain Monkhouse, and were well up. Then the clever huntsman shows his skill in handling the hounds, while Sir Anthony gets a little impatient, under the impression that the riders are pushing too forward. At length, however, it proves that the wily animal has gone at an angle, after endeavouring to baffle its pursuers by confusing and marring the scent ; for a favourite hound gives mouth significantly and works away down a hedgerow, soon to be followed by the whole pack. Off go the horsemen again at a rattling pace after a brief rest ; the scent is strong ; the hounds are in a cluster, dashing on majestically with their heads up ; the cool-headed rider selects his ground judiciously, clearing his fences and rails with a firm steady hand and a graceful seat ; an occasional horse may be seen on its nose, while its owner is stretched along the ground on his back in an expansive form, with sundry

stars and promiscuous figures glittering about his optic nerve. A horse here and there may be seen galloping in freedom, while its rider, in dirtied buckskins and crushed hat, is shouting to some ploughboy to catch it. Another steed, which has not accurately measured its leap, is floundering in a ditch, while its rider is on his hands and knees some four yards before its head. So manifold are the aspects of recreation that fall to the lot of those who love the music of the hound and exalt the muscular above the mental.

But where is our friend Mr. Jenkins all the while? Is he clearing hedges, ditches, and rails, like a hunter of many seasons? Or is he quietly sauntering homeward by the lanes, like a respectable tradesman and town-councillor? Like a prudent man he has stuck to the road; and he is riding along in meditative mood, one while turning over in his mind the amount per cent. he would clear on certain articles of commerce, next ruminating on the vanity of all worldly amusements: when, lo! the hounds and horsemen, having turned at right angles from the point where they were brought to a check, come rushing down upon him like a troop of cavalry. The pack are going steadily in full scent, and several of the riders are well up. Dolman and Shorland, under the guidance

of Captain Monkhouse, are still in the front rank, and each waves his hand by way of salutation to Mr. Jenkins, while the latter stands watching the cavalcade as it sweeps by him like a hurricane.

And now an incident occurs to our friend Jenkins which must be mentioned as seriously affecting his fortunes for the day. He has ridden through a gap into the field in order to watch the chase; but Mr. Spinks's old hunter is not content with looking on. His ancient spirit revives; the memory of early achievements probably fills his mind; and he determines at once to join in the exciting pursuit. He entertained a contemptible opinion of his rider. His thoughts went with the Shakspearian reasoning:

Why should a man whose blood is warm within,
Sit like his grandsire cut in alabaster?

So, he commences by a gentle caper in the direction of the hounds, which his rider is far from reducing to quietude as he presses somewhat too tightly on the curb-rein. Gradually the aged, but still high-mettled, animal rises into a canter, stretching out his neck as if impatient of the bit, while Mr. Jenkins's uneasy seat and dangling legs tend to urge him to still greater speed. Now he has extended himself into a swinging canter, and in the helplessness of his rider is evidently master

of the situation. By degrees he reaches out into a smart gallop, under the delusion perhaps that he can overtake the horsemen that are ascending the brow of a hill at some distance in front. We are sorry for friend Jenkins; we heartily wish he were elsewhere; but it cannot be. Man needs must go, if a certain person drives; and so is it with him. His hands are sometimes on the pummel of the saddle, sometimes behind it, sometimes on the reins. His knees are of no avail in steadying him; his legs flap about like those of a pair of trowsers on a clothes-line; he has nothing to rely on but his good luck and his vertical pressure. And worse than all—at the bottom of the field runs an awkward brook some five yards in width and of considerable depth—a brook that has afforded a bath gratis to many an equestrian. Alas! alas! what will become of our didactic friend? Can he reason with his recalcitrant steed? The old horse knows the watercourse well; he has leapt it before, and he can leap it again: so, increasing his speed, he dashes on some fifty yards for the spring, and clears it like a buck. But where is the rider? Previously to the leap he was slightly inclining backwards; the horse literally shoots from under him, and with a summersault in the air, which would have done honour to a professed mountebank,

he falls head foremost into the water. For a moment he might have been seen twirling in the shape of a curve—*οὐρανῷ σκέλη προφαίνων*¹—or, as Shakspeare has it, ‘his heels kicking at heaven,’ and then, all that remains of him visible are his legs protruding like stakes from the brook. Soon after, the figure of a man is seen floundering on the surface of the stream, thoroughly soaked and fishy. Can this be he who looked so brisk and vigorous in the breakfast-room? ‘Is this the haughty Marmion?’ Poor fellow! we fear that friend Jenkins is but one more illustration of that

Vaulting ambition, which o’erleaps itself,
And falls on t’other side.

He had never read Mazeppa most likely; but with that hero he might have exclaimed—

May ill betide
The school wherein I learnt to ride!

Well-a-day for that floating carcase! Will the breath return again into that unit of the Yarndale body corporate? But whether or no, hard is thy case, thou speaker of speeches and preacher of sermons! Had’st thou fallen even into the arms of Venus fresh springing from her native element and been greeted into the bargain with the dalliance of the four hundred

¹ Soph. Electra, 752.

Nereids that excited the admiration of old Homer, thou wouldst still have been cheerless and cold! The thermometer stood near freezing point.

But somehow we rarely meet with ill luck in life without some mitigating circumstances. If the *surgit amari aliquid* be true of good fortune, its converse is equally so in difficulties. At this critical moment, who should appear as the *Deus ex machinâ* but daft Joe?

‘By gum,’ he exclaimed in consternation, ‘but here’s a job; here’s th’ little fellow as’ll bring in th’ millinery reign a drownding! Holloa there! catch by this wand—stick fast—that’ll do;’ and he dragged his idol to the bank heavy and water-logged. Joe

Took him up tenderly,
Raised him with care;
Fashioned so slenderly,
Young, and so fair.

Joe wrung him out in the spirit of old Izaak Walton, ‘as though he loved him,’ muttering to himself the while,—‘By gum, but we maunno’ loise th’ little chap as’ll bring in th’ millinery reign—plenty to ate and nuffin to do—buttercakes, and beef, and ale, and playing on tambourine—and nobody to find faut!’

CHAPTER IX.

WIDOW MACKLIN'S HOSTELRY.

ABOUT half an hour after the scene of immersion described at the close of the last chapter, two horsemen, somewhat splashed and battered, drew up at the door of an ancient hostelry a few miles from the place where the hunt had met. An antique sign-board swung creakily over the door, having on it something in the shape of a white lion rampant,—which animal, however, had braved so many summer-heats and winter-blasts that its outline was but dimly distinguishable. The house was low and not very spacious, but it looked comfortable withal, and had been the scene no doubt of many rustic jollities ; its front was neatly swept and its horse-trough was supplied with pure water,—indications that inside the fire would be blazing brightly, the hearth tidy, and the floor well scoured. About half a dozen dwellings were scattered up and down after a straggling fashion, some of which were farm-houses, others labourers' cottages ; a venerable wide-spreading oak grew on the space where

four roads met, evidently an object of pride and admiration, for it was fenced off from the approach of cows with irritable cuticles and bullocks with strong horns. Now these several features seemed to constitute a rural village; and very pleasant it looked on the cold dry winter's morning.

‘A very clean-looking hostelry,’ said one of the horsemen; ‘we had better dismount, and give our good steeds a drench; and, after they have had a little rest, we can ride quietly on.’

The two equestrians were Dolman and Shorland. They had ridden through a great part of the chase remarkably well; Captain Monkhouse had complimented them highly; Sir Anthony Hazlerigg had eyed them as strangers, and from their mode of doing their work was in hopes that they would become members of the hunt; Mr. Spinks had pronounced them first-rate,—nay, he could not help expressing his surprise at their performance, especially as one of them came from Yarndale,—a place which he had already in his heart begun to look down upon, more particularly in the hunting field. But though they rode with courage and kept a steady seat, they both wanted that skilful hand and experienced judgment and knowledge of pace and ground, by which alone a horse can be humoured to the close of a severe chase.

It followed, consequently, that before the finish of the run—which was so spirited and dashing as to become notable in the annals of the hunt—their horses were pumped out, unable to advance against post and rail without considerable danger to both themselves and riders. Captain Monkhouse, therefore, seeing how matters were, advised the two to pull up and return home at an easy pace, content with their present achievements. So we now find them entering the rustic village, riding with a loose rein and at a sauntering walk.

‘Yes,’ Shorland replied, ‘it would be well to rest our horses and stretch our legs a short time here, for, I must tell you, I begin to feel the tension of the Sartorian muscle rather acutely. How your forensic legs bear it I know not; but my manufacturing ones might have come under the ban of the Inquisition and had a gentle touch of the rack,—an instrument which has now happily gone out of fashion. Besides, I am somewhat thirsty after my exertion, and I shall not repudiate a good glass of ale, if it be attainable. “Jane Macklin, dealer in ale, porter, tobacco, and spirituous liquors.” But here comes the ostler,—an ancient man and somewhat stilty, in his shirt-sleeves and a five days’ beard,—but one no doubt who has laid up

a stock of experience in horse-flesh, and perchance has had losses—go to !’

‘Thrown out, gentlemen?’ inquired the quaint-looking figure, coming up and touching his hat, as though it were no unusual thing with him to meet with gentlemen who had been thrown out,—‘a famous buster I know’d it’d be to-day. Them as runs from Coppledale cover are rum ’uns, they are; they are al’ays as fast as a buck and as hard as a hotter.’

‘Not thrown out quite, friend; but as our horses were pretty well blown, and not our own, we thought it better to stop in time, and neither do injury to man nor beast. Have you ever heard it said about here—

He that fights and runs away,
May live to fight another day?

What think you of that?’

‘Uncommon good; you know the rights o’ things you do,’—here the antiquated horse-keeper began to gauge their liberality;—‘if all these young sprigs ’d do the same, it’d save many a good nag’s life and spare a broken bone now and then.’

‘Can you give our horses a little meal and water with the chill off, and let them rest awhile with cloths on?’

‘Aye, can I, I should just think as how I could; I have watered horses afore to-day—

Sir Anthony Hazlerigg's Clincher, and Sir Richard Monkhouse's Moonraker, and the best on 'em; only leave it to me'—here from a physionomical inspection, he seemed to have satisfied himself that their hearts were generous and their purses well-lined,—'only leave it to me, and I'll wrap 'em up, and rub 'em down, and give 'em a drench as'll set 'em on their legs again for another bust if need be.'

But let us take an inside view of Jane Macklin's hostelry. The morning had been rather a busy one with her, the hunt having brought, as was not unusual, several customers to her house of entertainment. The house-part, as it was called, was a low room, not uncomfortable, with a cleanly-sanded floor, a hearth carefully swept, and a large cheerful fire. Along one side of the fire-place was a commodious settle, sometimes called a squab, which would afford sitting space for three or four stout visitors. Two arm-chairs of antique structure were placed near the hearth, and several seats of primitive but solid mould were ready in various parts for the weary traveller or the jovial reveler. Rows of shining pewter plates were ranged upon a rack which stretched along one side of the room. A picturesque clock, with case shiningly polished and face of a dull metallic hue, clicked in a corner. Sundry hams

and flitches of bacon were suspended from one portion of the ceiling, where they were not likely to come in contact with heads or hats,—which, with a bread-rack overspread with pendant oatcake, gave an appearance of plenty and good cheer to the place. Mrs. Macklin and her servant kept moving in and out among the guests, awaiting and obeying orders in an obliging way. She was a respectable woman, having been twelve years a widow ; had thriven since her husband's death, who had been his own best customer ; and had maintained her house in credit and respectability, even by the admission of the rural police and licensing justices.

One of the leading characters among the guests was a middle-aged farmer named Brock—low in stature, but very stout, from his face to the gaitered calves of his legs—with a merry eye deeply set in his obese features. He had trotted up on his market cob to get a sight of the hounds ; and, after gratifying his fancy, he had retired contentedly to widow Macklin's for a pipe and a pint of her home-brewed. Soon after his arrival a funny, wizen-faced little fellow, half-farmer, half-labourer, who, as Mrs. Macklin said, was already ' in a muddle o' drink,' commenced the song of ' the Barley Mow,' and managed to get through it very badly. Farmer Brock smoked on in a steady, contemplative

mood to the end, apparently admiring the performance, and then as a mark of approbation bade the hostess refill the vocalist's glass. After a while a brisk young farmer joined the company. He had not been able to go the pace with the hounds, so had wisely pulled up and turned into the White Lion, muttering that his horse had sprung a shoe. He had been a tailor at Southwark; but on the death of his father he had come down to his native air and had undertaken to carry on the paternal farm. Brock, the *αὐτόχθων*, evidently did not like the young buck; he was not a genuine agriculturist; he was an interloper; and the real son of the earth, Brock, the *γηγενής*, could not conceal his contempt at the idea of these 'thimble-and-thread chaps' turning farmers; so, after no long time, the two entered into a discussion upon agricultural topics in general and their own experiences in particular, which by degrees waxed personal and warm. Of all classes of men few can be more coolly provoking in chaffing and banter than farmers over their glass and pipe. Besides, each has such plain external evidence of his neighbour's foibles and failures that exasperating topics are never wanting to a willing gladiator. The dialogue between the two ran as follows:—

Brisk agriculturist: 'That turnip crop of

yours, Mr. Brock, in the five-acre field, was a failure, so far as I can judge.'

Farmer Brock (contemptuously): 'So far as you can judge!'

Brisk agriculturist: 'It seemed to me not to have been drained and subsoiled deep enough, Mr. Brock,—at least, that is my opinion.'

Farmer Brock: 'That's your opinion! And what would your opinion fetch in the market, young man?'

Brisk agriculturist (with a dash of indignation): 'Why, as much as another's, I should expect,—nearly as much as yours, I have a suspicion, Mr. Brock.'

Farmer Brock (sneeringly): 'Canst thou tell, lad, a swede-turnip from a cauliflower, or a root of mangol-oozel from a cabbage?'

Brisk agriculturist (knocking the ashes off his cigar impetuously): 'What do you mean, sir? I'm not used to hear such insulting language, sir.'

Farmer Brock (proceeding without noticing the interruption): 'Dost know, young 'un, the difference between beans and barley?'

Brisk agriculturist (provokingly, having perceived that the indignant would not do): 'Very likely, Mr. Brock; though I could hardly say whether that four-acre of yours had a turnip crop

on it or not. We all wondered that you should enter such a poor specimen for the premium.'

Farmer Brock (maliciously): 'Enter it for the premium! Dost recollect that bull thou showed? A loose-flanked, narrow-backed, cross-bred beast, as was fitter to make sausages on than to show for a prize! Dost think that greyhound-looking creature 'll mend the breed of stock in this country?'

Brisk agriculturist (somewhat pacified, inasmuch as he perceived that his opponent was angry): 'The bull was a little out of condition, I know; but he is a well-bred animal, and has good points. I don't see, Mr. Brock, that you can produce a better. My dairy cows are as good as yours, or better, and I get a higher price for my cheese, I think.'

Farmer Brock (whose rising impatience augured that there was some truth in the observation): 'Nowt o' th' kind, lad. Thy best might be a shilling a hundredweight over my worst. What canst thou know about farming? I say to thee again, thou canst hardly tell a dairy from a dung-heap.'

Brisk agriculturist (peevishly patronising): 'You farmers, Mr. Brock, that have never seen the world, get to think so much of yourselves and your ways. Nothing is right but what you do and your fathers have done. We who have

seen a little more of life, have our minds enlarged; we try to get out of the cart-rut. Your heads get choked up like a drain, and there you stick, without being able to get backwards or forwards. I hope to strike out a spark or two among you in the farming line before I've done.'

Farmer Brock (with bitterness intense, yet cool): 'In the farming line, sayest thou? Thou knows as much about farming as this pipe. Thou'd far better have stopped in Lon'on a patching breeches—in th' hinder parts on 'em!'

On this the young buck of a farmer was fairly roused: and it must be admitted that the allusion to his former occupation was anything but complimentary. There was a great force of provocation in farmer Brock's remark. The dandy agriculturist, therefore, arose, turned up his coat-cuffs, and began to square round farmer Brock, throwing himself into pugilistic attitudes, and threatened to plant a left-hander on the protuberant stomach of his opponent. Farmer Brock, however, seemed to take no heed of his attitudes; he evidently chuckled that 'he had got so good a rise out of the young puppy;' he went on smoking with apparent placidity, only puffing out a denser volume of smoke and repeating the words with

a quiet emphasis and peculiar unction,—‘a patching breeches—in th’ hinder parts on ’em.’

Affairs were now waxing critical—another slight word of provocation would have been the signal for actual combat—when there was an unexpected addition to the party, which caused a diversion in favour of peace. Daft Joe entered the house-place from some kitchen at the back, accompanied by one who seemed to be a respectable female in middle life, and who might have been his mother from the care he took of her. The lady’s figure and dress were peculiar. She—to use the feminine, as genders are regulated by the garments—wore a mob-cap profusely frilled, and a dress of comfortable materials but by no means of fashionable shape,—it had been cut out long before the crinoline era; her face, like that of Falstaff in disguise, bore upon it the protruding traces of whiskers and beard; her bust was shrunk; and her figure about the waist was round and untapering, like a Lancashire windmill. She marched imposingly between the belligerents, and with a gentle but authoritative wave of the hand, addressed the pugilistic agriculturist,—‘Peace; give not place to wrath and contention,—

Let dogs delight to bark and bite,
For ’tis their nature to—

but the hands of full-grown men were never made to tear each other's eyes.' Then she took her seat on the settle beside Farmer Brock, and called for a glass of brandy and water, very hot; while Joe at no great distance began to regale himself with a pipe and a glass of ale.

'Well, Joe,' said farmer Brock, 'did thou follow the hounds far to-day?'

'Middling.'

'Did thou see any tumbles?'

'Aye.'

'Who was spilt?'

'Parson Blackmore was rolled into a marl-hole.'

'Did thou pull him out, Joe?'

'Noa.'

'Why did thou not?'

'Why, he wunno' be wanted afore Sunday,—so he's toime to get out of hissel.'

'Ha! ha! ha! Capital, Joe.'

'Besides, I reckon nowt on him.'

'And why don't thou like him, Joe?'

''Cause he once caud me fou' names, and said I was a wagabon', and should be in the workus.'

'And what did thou say back, Joe?'

'I said, "I think thou're nowt to crack on (boast of) by thy words, anyhow."'

'Ha! ha! ha! Well done, Joe; thou're

cleverer than some folks take thee for. Parson Blackmore will be out o' th' pit when his tithes are wanted, depend on it, lad. It's a bit too bad, in my opinion, that our tithes should go to keep a parson in buckskin breeches, top-boots, and hunting horses.'

'But, Joe, I saw you myself hooking a man out of Deepdale Brook,' said the smart young farmer, who had now recovered his equanimity; 'I saw you very busy dragging him to land, while he there'—pointing to a labourer who was taking his ale—'ran after his horse, and caught it a few fields off.'

'Aye, it was the little fellow as is to bring in the "millinery reign."'

'Millinery reign, Joe!' exclaimed Mr. Brock; 'we're now under the millinery reign, I tell thee; if thou'd a wife and five daughters, thou'd find there was a millinery reign going on. What with crinlings and flounces and furbelows, dresses cost five pounds when they should cost but one. Our lasses at home says it must be; and what must be, must; they tell me it's the fashion, and fashion's the law. That's the way the money teems off, Joe, isn't it?'

'Aye.'

'But what dost thou mean, lad, by thy millinery reign?'

'Plenty to ate, an' plenty to drink, an'

nuffin to do, an' nobody to find faut. Swing-
ing on a gate, ating treggle (treacle) cakes,
and playing the tambourine o' th' day through.'

'Ha! ha! come, Joe, that'll do; but we
shall have to bide a bit before thy millinery
reign comes, I expect.'

'This little chap,' said Joe, pointing to the
lady, 'll bring it in for us, he says.'

To explain the matter, the person in female
dress was our old friend Mr. Jenkins. Joe had
dragged him out of the water-course, and
brought him to Widow Macklin's hostelry as
the nearest house of entertainment; but how
procure a change of clothes for him, as no one
of the male species resided at the inn? In-
vention, the offspring of necessity, came to
their aid; and Mrs. Macklin produced an outfit
from her own wardrobe, outer and inner
garments, stout and warm, in which Mr.
Jenkins arrayed himself upstairs, while his
own clothes were hung before a large fire in
the back kitchen.

'This,' said Joe, 'is the little chap as 'll bring
in the "millinery reign."'

Farmer Brock burst into a loud laugh, and
looked very wickedly at Mr. Jenkins in his
disguise. After a while he began to poke
the Councillor under the short rib, and
make love to him in a somewhat unbecoming

manner. Joe would have interfered; but farmer Brock declared that the lady was 'a hangel in petticoats,' and he even went so far as to beg for a salute. The company enjoyed the love-scene, while Joe and the Councillor were proportionately incensed. At length Mr. Jenkins rose in great indignation, and stood forth to rebuke Mr. Brock for his levity, and to exhort the company in general; he stretched out his arm in his usual oratorical fashion, and cleared his throat for a speech.

'He's the lad to talk,' soliloquised Joe, puffing out a volume of smoke, and taking a draught of ale; 'he's a rare 'un at it.'

It was at this moment that Dolman and Shorland entered the room. There was something so singular in the scene that they waited awhile looking on, before they advanced towards the fire. Mr. Jenkins was standing in his grotesque dress, his arm extended in order to command silence; farmer Brock was alternately laughing loudly and puffing out large volumes of smoke; the brisk agriculturist, the thermometer of whose temper had now risen to the hilarious, thought it equal to any scene at Sadler's Wells, and cheered accordingly; the labourer looked on with a stolid wonderment, which was occasionally broken in upon by a suppressed chuckle; the vocalist was intoning

on a low tipsy note the song with the elegant chorus, 'Oh! it's my delight on a shiny night, in the season of the year;' Joe was waiting in expectation for the oracle to speak; and Widow Macklin was saying to her maid, 'Bless me, Susan, this is the queerest lot of customers we've had for many a day.'

Mr. Jenkins (loquitur): 'I am Mr. Jenkins, a Councillor of the Yarndale Corporation, and a merchant of that important city. (Hear, hear.) My spirit is stirred within me to address you; I am driven to take up my parable and testify against your ways. I came over here with Mr. Bullivant, who intended to contest the county, and I have found you a soulless people—a soulless people, without Christian principles—'

Farmer Brock (interrupting, the said farmer having received a severe kick on the shins on the day of nomination): 'Holloa, my hearty—from Yarndale you've come, have you? and with Mr. Bully—what's his name? Will you keep a civil tongue in your head, master bobbin and billy-roller? We want none of your nigger-drivers here, I can tell you. Look 'ee, my mopsy in petticoats, there's a midden-stead round the corner; and if you don't know how to behave yourself in genteel society, we'll strip you of Mrs. Macklin's petticoats as naked as you were born, and give you another bath.'

Joe (deprecatingly): 'Maunno' do that—maunno' do that; wait a bit—we's hear about th' millinery reign afore long.'

Here Dolman and Shorland stepped forward and interposed. 'What on earth are you doing, Mr. Jenkins?' asked the former. 'In female apparel? It is immodest—it is unbecoming—it is against the Levitical law—it is against the law of the land. What will the Yarndale Corporation say? What will the dear young people say, whom you superintend in your Sunday-schools? It is an outrage on decency, Mr. Jenkins.'

'It is a necessity, sir; I was thrown into a deep river, and soaked through and through: a change of dress was a necessity, sir, even though the apparel was that of a woman. I am taking hot brandy and water, too, as a necessity. I swallowed much cold water and was getting the shivers. Am I not to save my life, sir? I did not intend to make myself known here, I admit; but what I am doing is a necessity also. I have been impelled to address a few words of exhortation to this company, which seems to stand much in need of it, sir; though my remarks do not seem to be received in a becoming spirit.'

'Come, come,' interposed Shorland, who did not wish to see his townsman exhibit his

powers of preaching so inopportunately, ‘sit down, Mr. Jenkins, and take your hot brandy and water, which you much need. Depend on it, Joe will be your only disciple, however long you talk.’

By degrees the company settled into a jovial humour; Dolman and farmer Brock had some pleasant banter; Shorland kept Mr. Jenkins quiet; the vocalist favoured the party with another song; Joe and the labourer drank their ale and smoked their pipes contemplatively; and the brisk agriculturist, who had regained his cheerful spirits, called for glasses round at his own expense.

Dolman in the evening amused the family at Grassdown Park with a description of the scene in Widow Macklin’s hostelry. And how was our friend the Councillor after his first appearance in the entirely new character of a Nimrod?

‘She has memories,’ writes Miss Pardoe, in her ‘City of the Sultan’ (a book now well-nigh forgotten), of one Madame la Baronne,—‘she has memories of Napoleon at St. Helena, where she resided several years; anecdotes, *piquantes* and political—those well-worded and softly-articulated compliments which *seat you upon velvet*.’ Does Miss Pardoe speak in the style of metaphor

or matter of fact? If there be a reality in her expression, Mr. Councillor Jenkins, on the evening of that eventful day, would not have been ungrateful for some of the 'well-worded and softly-articulated compliments' whereby Madame la Baronne 'seated' her friends 'upon velvet.'

CHAPTER X.

THE BALL IN PROSPECT.

THE ball! The ball's the thing! The ball certainly was the leading idea in many domestic circles at and near Cramford about this time. It was projected on the broadest basis, politically and socially. Some four or five hundred invitations had been sent out, including the aristocracy of the county; professional gentlemen, and tradesmen of respectability, with their families; men of various ranks and shades of opinion; ladies, ancient, middle-aged, youthful, and juvenile, most of whom regarded an election as a matter of small importance in itself, but as a weighty event in being the prelude to a dance. Milliners and milliners' assistants were plying their needles assiduously for miles around; ladies were trying on new dresses before large looking-glasses, and taking the opinion of sisters and friends upon certain grave questions of expansion here and contraction there; some were seen to practise a few graceful movements, watching the while the reflection of their own

attitudes; in certain families parlour dances were got up extempore by way of rehearsal. A few glumpy old fathers who had a prosaic way of looking at the bill poohed and pished; several antique maidens in whom the spark of sentimentality had gone out affected to sneer at the excitement; but, after all, expectation was on tip-toe, the prospect of a brilliant evening glittered before the minds of most, and the mode of expression almost universally concurrent was that with which we started,—the ball! the ball's the thing!

Some few, it must be admitted, doubted how far they could attend with propriety the grand *fête* at Grassdown Park. There was, for instance, Mr. Blenkinsop, an attorney at Cramford. He was the professional agent of the Reformers' Registration Society, and, as a consistent supporter of the liberal interest, had for many years advocated an extension of the suffrage. Mr. Blenkinsop was a man of some importance, tall in person and stately in attitude. He in his time had made several celebrated speeches on Borough affairs, and his townsmen for the most part spoke of him approvingly as a man of parts. He mostly took an opposition view of matters, it is true, whether on the question of a Church-rate, or a new face for the Town Hall clock, but withal he was a citizen of sub-

stance, mentally, corporeally and financially, and not ill-meaning. Then there was Mr. Popplewell, one of the Cramford doctors, but not the regular medical attendant at the Park : he generally voted with the Whigs, but his political views were somewhat nebulous ; he held them partly in subservience to his professional interests. He was a little man made up of round O's. His head was circular, his eyes and eyebrows were circular ; his nose was circular, like a large horn button ; his cheeks were circular ; his mouth was circular ; his chin was circular ; his stomach was circular ; in Horatian phrase, he was *totus, teres atque rotundus*.

‘ Have you accepted the invitation to Grass-down Park ? ’ inquired Mr. Blenkinsop of the doctor, with his usual precision and gravity of manner : ‘ I presume you will have been invited, Mr. Popplewell, as one of our principal citizens.’

Mr. Popplewell was taking tea at the Blenkinsops’, a little Blenkinsop being laid up with the measles.

‘ Why, h’m,’ replied the doctor evasively, standing in some awe of the lawyer as a man dealing in subtleties, and not knowing in what light he might view the question. ‘ H’m—I have been meditating on the matter,

Mr. Blenkinsop—meditating on the matter seriously.’

The truth was, he had accepted the invitation by return.

‘I hardly know, doctor, what to say on the subject: we lawyers are accustomed to weigh matters carefully in the scales of justice and equity; you see, it will never do to forego one’s principles, doctor: it would be putting one’s self out of court by one’s own act and deed.’

‘Well, now, papa,’ interposed Miss Blenkinsop, who was a lively girl of twenty, and one of three daughters who had already arrived at marriageable years, ‘who ever heard of anyone talking as you do? As if there was anything political in a ball! If any one engages you for a lawsuit, you don’t ask what his political opinions are. And surely you can’t find out any thing Conservative, Whig, or Radical in a quadrille.’

‘My dear, you don’t understand the matter,—it can hardly be expected you should, seeing you have mixed but little with the world; you look but on the bare surface of the question; you do not balance the pros and the cons; however lightly you may treat the subject, principles are mighty, and must be maintained—ahem!’

Here Mr. Blenkinsop assumed a look of

austere resolution, as though he would be willing to die a martyr to principles, like one of those stern patriots we read of in ancient times.

‘Indeed, papa, I don’t see how you can pick any principles out of a waltz. Besides, all Cramford and the county round will be there; and the Sloving’s will be there; and we must be there too.’

Mr. Augustus Sloving was supposed to be paying attention to Miss Blenkinsop.

‘And what say you, doctor, on this knotty point?’ enquired Mrs. Blenkinsop, handing him his cup refilled.

‘Why, ma’am, h’m! principles are powerful—very powerful—more powerful than drugs. I could mix you up a pill, ma’am—’

‘Good gracious, doctor!’ exclaimed Miss Blenkinsop, ‘what have we to do with drugs or pills? We are talking about a ball!’

‘Yes, my dear young lady, and may I not introduce the comparison of a little ball in the shape of a pill? Ha! ha! we medical men are sometimes facetious.’ Then turning to Mrs. Blenkinsop, ‘Pills, ma’am, principles, ma’am—a muffin, if you please—pills, ma’am, principles, ma’am—another piece of sugar, Mrs. B.—thank you! pills, ma’am, principles, ma’am’—here the doctor seemed to have lost the continuity

of his illustration, 'drawing out,' as Holofernes said, 'the thread of his verbosity finer than the staple of his argument,'—pills, ma'am, principles, ma'am—h'm! well, really, I have forgotten how I was going to draw the comparison; I have lost the thread of my thoughts.'

'No great loss!' said Miss Blenkinsop, laughing.

'All I can say,' continued Mr. Blenkinsop, 'is this,—if we go to the ball at Grassdown Park, we shall do it under protest: we must hold by our principles to all intents and purposes.'

Mr. Blenkinsop in his heart had never entertained any doubt about going to the ball; it was only right, however, for him to talk about his principles and to protest.

In due time the long-expected evening arrived, and the gentlefolk of town and country round about were arraying themselves in their most attractive—or, if you will, destructive—dresses. What a quaint sight it would be, if with the cloak of invisibility you could take a bird's-eye glance at the four or five hundred ladies and gentlemen who are ogling themselves in their glasses and rejoicing in their personal appearance! O thou blooming belle, hast thou no mercy as thou puttest the finishing touch to thine attractions by that peeping rosebud? O

thou beau, murderous and deadly in thine aim, is not the point of that whisker thou art trimming, intended to be the polished weapon that is to penetrate some lady's heart? Well, be it so, fine gentlemen and pretty dears; go where glory waits you; shoot your arrows, and achieve your conquests; matrimony is the point on which the world turns round; and yet it is as uncertain as a game of speculation; the future of marriage is beyond human ken; it may end in a family of a dozen or in the Court of the Judge Ordinary.

As the clock in the courtyard of Grassdown Park struck eight, the stream of equipages began to flow up the avenue to the main entrance. Every variety of vehicle was there, from the rich landed proprietor's carriage with its liveried servants to the single-horsed cab. What an incessant ringing of the hall-door bell was kept up! What a clatter of carriage-steps and banging of carriage-doors were maintained, smart as a fusilade of irregular artillery! What a variety of forms emerged from those carriages, from slim eighteen to stout sixty! And might not the last whisper of a fond matron here and there to her daughter have been heard by an invisible attendant, 'Now, Julia dear, hold yourself up, and step springy!'

On that evening there was an early dinner-

party at Grassdown Park, preparatory to the more sprightly dance. It consisted of some county families who were on intimate terms with Sir Richard and Lady Monkhouse. The proposer of Captain Monkhouse, with his wife and family, was of course there, though the ball was assumed to be divested of all political significance. It was first necessary to acclimatise Mouthenden de Bracy Mouthenden, Esq., by titled association, before he could venture into a mixed atmosphere of aristocratic and plebeian gases. The Rector of the family Living hard by was also there, a venerable Christian gentleman and a finished scholar of former days. Others also were of the party whose names it is unnecessary to mention.

‘And how have you gone on to-day, Mr. Dolman?’ inquired Sir Richard at dinner; ‘I hope you have some energy left in you for the ball.’

‘You may depend upon that, Sir Richard; as this is our last evening at Grassdown Park we must lose nothing of the enjoyment, for I fear it will be a long time before we have such a holiday again.’

Dolman had established himself in Sir Richard’s favour; he had made himself agreeable by his off-hand but not presuming manner, and had entertained the family by his half-serious,

half-quizzical descriptions of scenes in which he had been an actor. Sir Richard fancied he saw in him a degree of ability by which he would rise in his profession, if only he could keep steadily to work.

‘Have you had a fair day’s sport?’

‘Very good indeed, Sir Richard: your keeper Varty is beginning to look on Shorland and myself as genuine sportsmen.’

‘Did he not at first?’

‘No, indeed: he was heard to say that as I came from Cockneydom and Shorland from Cottondom, it would be well if we did not bag a beater instead of a pheasant.’

‘Ha! ha! Varty has a better eye to a cock pheasant than a cockney, I dare say.’

‘Then, are you leaving Grassdown Park so soon?’ asked Mouthenden de Bracy Mouthenden, Esq., patronisingly.

‘Yes, sir; to-morrow to fresh fields and pastures new: only my fields will be in the midst of London—those that are “fields no more.” My thoughts, sir, will have to turn from bagging game to bagging briefs.’

‘Then you are of the legal profession, I presume?’

‘Yes, I am undergoing a preparatory training for the Bar; and when I arrive at the dignity of a pleader, may I ask you, sir, to remember me,

should you ever attain to the luxury of a lawsuit?’

‘The luxury of a lawsuit? I do not comprehend—a hem!’

Mouthenden de Bracy Mouthenden, Esq., had in truth been for several years involved in some petty, irritating law squabbles about a worthless property, and had fumed and fidgeted more than enough about them, denouncing the rapacity of the legal profession, the rascality of his opponents, and the injustice of mankind. Of this Dolman was not aware.

‘Indeed, sir,’ replied Dolman, quite unmoved, ‘I really think it must be a supreme luxury to have a pleasant little lawsuit on hand. If I were a man of old family and large possessions like yourself, I would never willingly be without one; I would nurse it like a pet spaniel of King Charles’s breed. A chess-player gets interested in his game—a general in conducting the operations of a campaign—but neither of these exercises is to be compared with a lawsuit, in bringing out every faculty of attack and defence, of secret manœuvre and open assault, of watching opportunities and carrying off your prey.’

‘Yes,’ said Mouthenden seriously; ‘that may be all very well for the lawyer; but how is it for the client, I should like to know? I’ll

tell you what it is, sir, it's being roasted over slow fire—that's what it is.'

'Well, sir, it is a matter of taste, to be sure; but a cause, well tried, win or lose, is a beautiful thing, you will admit.'

'Admit, did you say? I am not inclined to admit the proposition at all. My impression is, and Sir Richard Monkhouse knows my sentiments on the point, that the law ought to be reformed—reformed from top to bottom—simplified—digested—reduced to intelligible principles. Feudal laws served for feudal times in the days of our ancestors; but they will not do for the nineteenth century. In this age of enlightenment and science and—and—cheap everything—why should not law be cheap? Why should we not be able to get a suit over in something less than a dozen years?'

'Pardon me, sir; we look at the matter from different stand-points; the law seems to me to be beautiful in its intricacy—like a machine, complicated it is true, but working axle with axle, and cogwheel with cogwheel.'

'Axle and cogwheel!' broke in the man of lineage, losing all patience—'axle and cogwheel! The devil as like, sir! What do we want with cogwheels and axles? Talk to the cotton-spinner from Yarndale, Mr. Bully—Bully—what's his name?—about your axles

and cogwheels! What have gentlemen to do with such things? D—n your cogwheels and axles, sir—I really beg pardon for my inadvertence’—bowing towards Lady Monkhouse and the Rector. ‘We want cheap law, sir, that’s what I say—and it’s no new opinion of mine, as Sir Richard knows.’

‘You may admire axles and cogwheels,’ said Sir Richard, laughing, ‘but you would hardly like to get your fingers between them, Mr. Dolman. You may think the large lion in the Zoological Gardens a very magnificent creature, but might not consider it altogether a luxury to enter his den.’

‘Well, Sir Richard, I admit the luxury might be reversed, it might be on the side of the lion. Nevertheless, the law is a noble piece of mechanism, and we must live by our professional axles and cogwheels, as Shorland there turns out gold from his machinery.’

‘I did not introduce you, Mouthenden,’ said Sir Richard, ‘to our young friend there, Mr. Shorland, who is a merchant and manufacturer at Yarnsdale—but not a supporter of Mr. Bullivant.’

‘I trust,’ observed the great man, who, prejudices apart, was quite a gentleman, ‘that Mr. Shorland will not suppose I have spoken anything that was intended to be offensive.’

Mr. Bullivant had no business to offer himself to our county constituency: he might make a good member for a Lancashire borough, but he was out of place here. I admire very much the inventive skill and daring enterprise of Yarn-dale; but Yarn-dale is Yarndale after all—excuse me, sir—I mean, it ought not to send us a county representative.'

'I quite agree with you there, sir,' replied Shorland; 'Mr. Bullivant is scarcely a fair type of the Yarndale merchant; he is a busy, bustling, somewhat noisy man—not altogether ill-meaning, but capable of being very rude if his temper be aroused. You must pardon me, however, when I say,' he continued, good-humouredly, 'that I sometimes think you large landed proprietors are rather too hard upon Yarndale, and Lancashire generally.'

'Why so? All we want is that Lancashire should manage its own business, and leave our county to itself.' Here Mr. Mouthenden drank off his wine, and took a pinch of snuff from his gold crest-adorned box: he began to have a distant smell of cotton and train-oil.

'That is scarcely possible, sir, between town and country; there is a mutual dependence between them, whatever may be thought to the contrary: our mouths must be fed by your agricultural produce, and when trade is brisk

they consume a great deal. Besides, consider how greatly we are your benefactors in cheapening every article of daily use.'

'You do it, I suppose,' said Dolman, laughing, and thinking perhaps to draw off the encounter from De Bracy, 'purely out of love for your species. Your feelings are patriotic and unselfish in the matter, I have no doubt. When you supply petticoats for the Hottentots, you do it simply out of affection for the Hottentots, without question.'

'I did not say that: perhaps you will not set the axles and cogwheels of the law in motion without some return, any more than we shall ours. But consider how much we have done in cheapening many of the necessities of life. Suppose the dresses of the ladies in the ball-room this evening cost altogether some thousands of pounds—why, before we began with our cogwheels and axles and spindles and looms, they would have appeared in the bill at some five or ten times as much.'

Young Reginald De Bracy Mouthenden kept his glass fixed in his eye, and gazed languidly now and then at the speakers. Miss Mouthenden appeared to be a placid young lady without any very distinctive characteristics. She did not seem to be at all discomposed when her father became slightly excited: she

was probably used to these trifling ebullitions. So far as appearance went, she was not to be sneezed at, it is true; but then you expect much from one who has a pedigree of eight centuries and has descended from a Crusader.

‘And what did you think of Charles last Sunday?’ Lady Monkhouse enquired of the Rector; ‘he seems likely to make a good preacher, we think.’

The Yarndale curate had assisted the Rector in his Sunday duty, and received the congratulations of his family on the event.

‘Indeed, Lady Monkhouse, I think he has every qualification for a good preacher. Towns like Yarndale are not so agreeable in themselves; but they are excellent schools for clerical training.’

‘He gives us rather an amusing account of the people there; but he speaks well of them as a whole. He actually says, that a mechanic with a grimy face and hands as black as a coal will come up to him and shake hands, as if there was nothing strange in it. Ha! ha! ha! is not that odd? He told us that a milliner actually lectured him on his style of preaching, laying it down very primly that he “wanted unction.” He made us laugh last night—ha! ha!—by relating how some of his Sunday-school female teachers

blamed him to his face for not “smiling affectionately” on them when they met. Is it not a very comical state of things? But Charles speaks very well of the people generally: he does not give us these anecdotes to quiz them, but only to describe their peculiarities; he says that they are kind and genuine at heart.

CHAPTER XI.

*THE BALL AS IT WAS, AND HOW
IT HAD BEEN.*

THE ball commenced, slowly at first, like a railway train or a vessel catching the wind, but soon to move on at a brisker pace. An animating sight, surely, was that long, long room called the Library, with its books and pictures and statues and columns, and on this evening filled with living beauties and graceful forms of flesh and blood. Gaily decorated was the spacious apartment; brilliant were the lights; spirited was the band in the orchestra; naturally fair and elegantly got up for the most part were the ladies. The first quadrille at the top of the room was an aristocratic one; the Mouthendens and Hazleriggs, and such-like, were bound, out of respect for blood, to show some exclusiveness at the commencement of the evening; but by degrees boundary fences were broken down, and young gentlemen with long pedigrees condescended to dance and laugh with the daughters of those who lived by the law, or by medicine, or by trade. Captain Monkhouse

established himself as county member for life; he danced with every lady he could lay hands on, and gave himself no airs. And then, our friend Dolman?—rarely in his lifetime had he knocked off so much real work in a given time as he got through that evening. Next to Captain Monkhouse, he was the favourite among the ladies; he danced, chatted and laughed unceasingly; indeed, Sir Richard Monkhouse complimented him by saying, that if he could win his way with clients as he did with the ladies, he would one day be Lord Chancellor. He had a lively partner in Miss Blenkinsop, and he rattled away with her so amusingly that Mr. Sloving began to look askance at the pair, and to bite his lips; but Miss Blenkinsop, with feminine instinct, after tantalising Mr. Sloving just so far as he could bear, soon coaxed him into a good humour again by apparent artlessness, and they became better friends and more like lovers than ever.

And here we see Mr. and Mrs. Jasper Spinks; and, lo! our old friend Mr. Jenkins. He may have entered the saloon with certain misgivings; he may have argued with himself, as on the hunting-field, whether it was not his duty to lift up his voice against all frivolous amusements. The heart of Jenkins, however, seemed

to relent in its austerity for a while, and to enter into a truce with Vanity Fair. Nay, Dolman caught hold of him, extemporised a partner for him, and declared that he should join in a quadrille. Now, about dancing he knew scarcely as much as that animal which is made sometimes to caper against its will with a chain to its muzzle ; but Mr. Jenkins seemed to think that dancing came by nature. So to dance he stood up, vainglorious man ! But he soon got into such inextricable confusion, bumping with the reverse of his figure against the back of one lady, getting his foot in the flounce of another, treading on the toe of a third, and almost upsetting a fourth by an infelicitous cannon, that the whole quadrille was either laughing or crying, and Dolman had to interpose to restore order.

Then, ladies getting into years have their enjoyment on such occasions. They watch the movements of the dancers as they thread the intricate mazes, and recall their own exploits when they were thirty years younger and a stone or two lighter. They cast furtive glances at their daughters, and each thinks that there never was such a graceful fairy as Julia or Georgiana, as the case may be, doubting whether even at the zenith of her own attractions she was her equal. They roll back the flying

years, and become rejuvenescent in the pleasures and graces of those who owe to them their being.

There are snug parties, moreover, in side rooms, enjoying their quiet rubber; while the sounds of music and dancing, coming to them from a distance, occasionally disturbed the cogitations of an old dowager, and made her lose the odd trick, to the vast chagrin of some crusty fellow, her partner.

Sir Richard moved quietly around in all directions, now complimenting some belle on her attractions, now entering into a friendly chat with some elderly lady on past times. He conversed with Mr. Blenkinsop on the question of repairing and restoring Cramford Church, which was then agitating the town, when the latter in a becoming manner maintained his principles on the point in dispute; and he complimented Mr. Spinks on the forward place he held throughout that brisk run from Coppendale cover. Then he shook hands with Dr. Popplewell, expressing his sorrow that measles were prevalent, but quite confident that patients were in good hands when they were under Dr. Popplewell's charge.

But where is Shorland? There he is—busy—full of muscular energy; but he seems to dance oftener and to talk more earnestly with Miss Woburn than with anyone else. What

are we to think of this? Is it a mere accident? Or is there something peculiarly magnetic in the lady? Judge for yourself; you may be experienced and acute in deciding such delicate questions. He certainly seems to be putting on his best manners, and to be paying suit and service like a gallant cavalier. Is there anything singular in this? Certainly nothing. Miss Woburn is attractive, sensible, and agreeable at all times. May not a man dance more than once with a lady without paying his addresses to her? Assuredly he may. Then, why raise up a superstructure of suspicion on such a commonplace foundation?

‘You were never in Yarndale, I presume, Miss Woburn?’ said Shorland, in the interval of dancing.

‘We once passed though it on our way to Scotland; but it did not seem to offer many attractions, as we took a bird’s-eye view of it from the railway.’

‘No, it would not, certainly; and yet it contains many fine buildings—not private residences, but warehouses of considerable architectural pretensions. Its suburbs, too, are not without their attractions; and very few live in the town who have the means to reside out of it.’

‘I think I heard Charles say that you and he

were not very far from the mills and sometimes in the smoke of Yarndale.'

'Yes; he has chosen his duty against my advice, you must understand, however much satisfaction I may have in his help. We are endeavouring to Christianise, or at least civilise, a long-neglected district—one in which I have some interest from the claims of property, while his part of the work is purely gratuitous.'

'I certainly wish you every success.'

'I have good hope that we shall not altogether fail; we already see the fruits of our efforts; and we hope to see them much more abundantly.'

'Do you mean that the labouring people have been neglected by the owners of property where they dwell?'

'Yes; but you must not understand the ownership of property as you see it in the country. In Mudlington, for instance, there are many proprietors of large establishments in each of which a considerable number of operatives is employed; but none of these proprietors live in the neighbourhood, many are quite indifferent about the moral and social condition of their workpeople, reasoning that they have nothing whatever to do with them when away from their premises. The district, too, in which we are

working has been left without church or schools,—at least, such as we wish to see,—in short, without any systematic spiritual supervision. You may reasonably suppose, therefore, that the population, left without clergyman and resident proprietors, has scarcely had fair play.’

‘But the people of Yarndale must be very liberal, for Charles says that you have succeeded without much difficulty in collecting a great amount of money,—enough, with grants from public societies, to build a handsome church and school, with a fair endowment for the clergyman.’

‘Yes ; they are very liberal as a rule : money circulates freely, much more so than even among wealthy landowners, who have fixed incomes. The amount of money, in popular phrase, “turned over ” each year is enormous ; and consequently a portion of the Pactolus flows into the channel of subscriptions more readily than if the stream was very sluggish and scarcely perceptible in its motion. Still, I do not think that the giving for the erection of a church or schools is enough. Proprietors of mills and other industrial establishments ought to take a moral supervision over their workpeople, as far as may be.’

‘Is that possible ?’

‘Indirectly, no doubt it is, and to a great extent. You cannot act upon them by compulsion when off your works, nor ought any one to wish to do so ; but you may nevertheless bring a general moral influence to bear upon them with effect,—of that I am assured.’

‘Are they poor?’

‘By no means, as a rule. The earnings of many families for a week would keep a labourer’s cottage in the country very affluently for a month ; but they frequently misspend their wages on what is useless,—too often, on what is hurtful.’

‘They are intelligent, I understand.’

‘Yes, generally speaking they are not wanting in mental power ; they have greater opportunities of sharpening their wits than farm labourers ; besides, their occupations require a certain amount of quickness. But you must sometimes pay Monkhouse a visit on your journey northward ; and if you will permit us to show you the wonders of our mechanical, manufacturing, mercantile city, we should feel,—at least, I should feel—greatly honoured.’

‘I should like very much to see Yarndale ; it must contain many objects, which, if not beautiful, are yet wonderful, as illustrations of inventive skill. From the antagonism between commerce and agriculture, I fancy that they

who live in the country generally form an opinion more unfavourable of the place and its inhabitants than is deserved.'

'You must not expect to find very long pedigrees among us. The chimnies are longer than the pedigrees; Mr. Mouthenden De Bracy Mouthenden, I fear, would be sadly shocked to find that many millionaires hardly know anything about their grandfathers.'

'Pedigree certainly is one of Mr. Mouthenden's weaknesses; he gets warm on the subject often, as he became at dinner about cogwheels and axles. A person may dwell on an idea till it becomes almost a monomania.'

Here a small flower dropped from some portion of Miss Woburn's dress, which Shorland immediately picked up. He did not, however, return it; but holding it in his hand, enquired in a subdued tone, 'May I be permitted to keep this token?' The lady made no reply; whether she heard the request, it is impossible to say; but Shorland took possession of the little rose.

'But look at Mr. Dolman!' Miss Woburn remarked, perhaps to evade the question—'what an acquisition he is this evening! He seems to be dancing incessantly, and to be making all the ladies merry wherever he comes. You see he has now got Miss Popplewell for a partner.'

Miss Popplewell was a facsimile of her father the doctor—a little etherialised no doubt, as being a lady, but a chip of the old block. She was chubby and made up of circles, but not altogether inelegant; and then she was good-natured and lively; she had no angularities either of form or temper, and with Dolman she seemed to be chatting away in a pleasant and natural manner.

Twelve o'clock was now approaching; and it had been the invariable rule at Grassdown Park, from time immemorial, to wind up before that interlude for refreshment popularly called supper with the ancient tune and dance of Sir Roger de Coverley. No doubt it is a vulgar country dance, but it is a jolly one: no doubt it is democratic in its character, inasmuch as it brings aristocrat and plebeian to the same level, and mixes up all classes in an uncere-monious medley; but at this period of the evening, the filagree frost of pedigree had melted before the sun of feminine beauty and the warmth of enjoyment. Sir Richard ordered the tune to be struck up and the couples to take their places, and the time-honoured dance to begin. Neither was it confined to the young. It was intended to comprise all ages. Ladies and gentlemen past their meridian—fathers and mothers—took up their positions laughingly,

and resolved to show the young ones what they could do, for the sake of 'Auld lang syne.' Dr. Popplewell, Mr. Blenkinsop, and many of the same age with them, entered into the spirit of the movements, and went through their parts with a vivacity which put to shame some of the more juvenile. Captain Monkhouse thought he should have had a lazy partner in Mrs. Blenkinsop, but he was mistaken. Mr. Spinks found in Mrs. Popplewell one thoroughly up in the figure, and fully resolved to go through her exercises with conscientious efficiency. Young Reginald De Bracy Mouthenden was paired with Mrs. Sloving, who proved to be in high gymnastic condition, and was greatly amused, as she kept dancing his glass incessantly from his eye. And Dolman had not yet parted from Miss Popplewell. He led her through the mazes with an energy of action that was delightful to see in these days of sleepy dancing, till by the time they reached the bottom the lady was somewhat steamy and palpitating. Then, amidst laughing, joking, and crowding amongst ladies dressed *in extenso*, the announcement was made that supper was on the table.

And what shall we say of the supper? It may be that the old English word has now been supplanted by some hybrid of French importa-

tion. Sir Richard, however, called the entertainment supper ; and what a very brilliant and cheery supper it was ! What cool, creaming wines were there, pleasant to the palate of the thirsty dancer !—none of those cheap, dirty, acid, unwholesome, stomach-aggravating beverages with which the last commercial tariff, like an open flood-gate, has deluged our dining rooms. Wines, rich and rare, were at hand for those who sought refreshment—ices unexceptionable for those who required cooling—viands of every variety for the stout appetite as well as the Apician taste.

When the guests had done justice to the good things that had been set before them, and there was that short pause that generally ensues on the conclusion of a meal, Mouthenden de Bracy Mouthenden, Esq., arose, and requested that every glass might be filled. ‘I beg to propose to you,’ he continued, ‘the health of our host and hostess ; and may they live long, surrounded by their present blessings, and the dispensers of blessings to all around them ! (Loud cheers.) I have known Sir Richard from boyhood, and at college we heard together “the chimes at midnight” (laughter), and I have never known him other than a high-minded, honourable, English gentleman. (Applause). He has served his country long and well in Parlia-

ment—of course this social gathering has nothing to do with politics (a slight unconscious cough)—and he has trained up his family to serve their country too. (Hear, hear.) Captain Monkhouse is now our county member—of course there is nothing political in wishing he may prove as good-hearted an Englishman as his father (laughter, and cheers); another son is serving his country as a soldier in India (cheers); and a third, after distinguishing himself at Oxford, is now labouring as a clergyman among a poor population at Yarndale, ahem!—(hear, hear)—so that Sir Richard has not been 'useless in his generation, nor will he be soon forgotten.' (Cheers.) Onward went the speaker in his flow of eloquence, eliciting loud applause as he complimented Lady Monkhouse on her many excellent qualities, and declared that he remembered the time when scarcely a belle in that brilliant assembly would have been her match. At length he wound up with an oratorical burst which raised a storm of enthusiasm. Sir Richard responded with much feeling and his usual good humour. As the remarks of his friend Mouthenden were true about the happiness he enjoyed in his domestic relations, he recommended all the young bachelors before

him to follow his example, and get married at once. (Loud laughter.) Indeed, when he looked upon the beautiful faces and elegant forms that graced his table, he did not see how they could resist his counsel. Here the young ladies slightly tittered, and the matrons tried to look doubtful on the matter. When Sir Richard concluded, there was of course loud applause; and some of the elder guests might have been heard remarking: ‘A fine old English gentleman; none of his sons will come up to him; such men are not made now-a-days;’ while young ladies were observed to whisper, just loud enough for the neighbouring young beaux to hear them, ‘What a dear old pet is Sir Richard! He’s worth all the flashy sprigs of the present day put together!’

After a while they whose spirit for dancing was still unquenched returned to the ball-room, and commenced again like giants refreshed. But a considerable number, especially of middle-aged gentlemen, remained at the supper-table, gathering towards the end where Sir Richard sat. Many speeches were now made; many toasts were drank; many replenished decanters were brought up. The stateliness of Mr. Blenkinsop deepened into a sagacious solemnity, and Dr. Popplewell, who always spoke *ore rotundo*,

began to articulate in a bubbling manner, as though his tongue was slightly enlarging in his mouth.

At what time the last Terpsichorean votary left the ball-room, it is not accurately chronicled ; but at length the lights were out and the hall was still. Dr. Popplewell gained in energy and geniality what he lost in powers of articulation, and kissed his wife and daughter with much warmth as they rode home. In the morning, while Mrs. Popplewell was going through her duty at the breakfast-table like a staid matron, and Bessy was as brisk as a bee, the doctor said, as he drew his hand across his forehead,—‘ Dear me, I don’t know how it is—but—but—will you give me just one more cup of tea ?—somehow that lobster salad never does agree with me—never ! ’

The ball, however, did not end with the morning. For a full month after, the dances were danced over again, and the excitement of the night was kept up. Never had there been such a ball in any portion of her Majesty’s dominions—that was universally admitted ; and it turned out afterwards that Sir Richard Monkhouse’s advice was taken, and that several couples, from being temporary partners on that evening, had danced themselves into partnerships for life.

CHAPTER XII.

A 'RECEPTION.'

DR. McTHWACKER had achieved his object, and in Margaret Maxwell's vacated office had placed a real member of his church, a genuine supporter of his theories, a faithful follower of his doctrines. Distinctive tenets of religion, it is true, were not admissible at the schools as subjects of instruction; but still, it was an agreeable thought, that as mistress there was one in whom he had thorough reliance—one with whom he could enter into confidential communication on any matter whatever. The ruffle in the course of events that had been caused in connection with Miss Maxwell's resignation had nearly subsided, and the stream was again flowing on with ordinary smoothness. Young Timothy Brierly had returned from his visit to Leicestershire, where, according to his own account, he had often led the field and astonished the natives; he talked largely of his equestrian exploits, but he was never known to allude to his encounter with Dolman. In-

deed, it must be stated as in some measure to his credit, that he had become sensible of the bad, perhaps dangerous, position into which he had been brought, and it may be fairly hoped that his sense of fear, if not of shame, had taught him a lesson of propriety for the future. A knock-down blow may be as effective a monitor as a magistrate's warrant, and the *argumentum ad baculum* is generally attended with less trouble than an appeal to the Bench.

The marriage of Graham and Miss Maxwell was now near at hand. It had been Margaret's intention to have remained another half-year at the school, after which the wedding was to have been solemnised; but as she had relinquished the engagement, it was desired that the event should be no longer delayed. Indeed, there was no reason whatever why it should be postponed. Graham was now a rising character, both in personal estimation and in commercial status. He was a partner in a large and flourishing manufacturing establishment, which by his own application and care, in co-operation with Frederick Shorland, he was improving and perfecting by degrees. The prospect was now clear before him. He had so arranged his plans that he could live comfortably and genteelly, but inexpensively, and at the same time by saving increase

annually his interest in the mills. He had taken a pleasant cottage near at hand in the country, as his future residence, and was furnishing it in a suitable manner. He was twenty-five, and Margaret twenty-one: as candidates for matrimony, they were advanced in years according to the mode of reckoning in the manufacturing districts.

'Maggie, I don't know what to say: you are going to be married happily and well, and it would be selfish to wish it different; but I am sorry to lose you, after all. I shall be very lonely without you, Maggie.'

This was said by blind Ellen. Margaret and she were alone together in the parlour at Mrs. Maxwell's; they were standing before the fire, each with an arm round the other's waist, after arranging certain matters preparatory to the wedding. Ellen was to be one of the bridesmaids, and the dress was lying in the room which Graham had presented to her for the occasion.

'Why, Ellen,' Margaret answered her soothingly, 'how foolishly you talk; we shall be more together than we have ever been: we shall have more opportunities of seeing each other. You know how glad we shall both be to have you at our house whenever and however long you may please.'

‘Yes, that is true, Maggie, no doubt ; but your thoughts will soon have new directions and your feelings will run into fresh channels—it is quite natural and right that it should be so, —and we shall be good friends ; but we shall not be to each other what we have been—mutual sharers of every joy and every sorrow. When I say this, though, don’t think I wish it were otherwise : it will all be for the best and the happiest in the end, I am very sure.’

‘You are a silly girl to talk so, Ellen ; and if you don’t get off that way of thinking, I shall scold you. You have seemed to me rather low-spirited of late, and you must not brood on fancies. Your health is delicate at best, and it will suffer if you allow yourself to become melancholy and moody. But come, grandmother wants to see you in your new dress. It seems strange, Ellen, that while she is so sharp with all of us sometimes, she never says a cross word to you. I have noticed that the tenderest part of her nature always comes uppermost when she begins to talk to you, even though she has been speaking in her hasty way to some of us just before.’

Hereupon, Margaret assisted Ellen as she tried on and arranged her new dress. It was a plain and modest but an elegant one, of delicate colours blending tastefully with her

beautifully clear complexion. One unacquainted with the faculties of the blind might have supposed that so far as she was concerned it was immaterial whether it were becoming or not; but her sense of touch was so acute that by it she grasped the idea of the dress as accurately as if the conception had been acquired through the eyesight. Hastily running her fingers down it, she saw at once with the mental vision what was its character and fashion: indeed, by some mysterious faculty she seemed to have an instinctive perception of its varying colours. Bess snuffed at it for a moment, and then looking up at her mistress appeared to be satisfied with her appearance: after which they all went into the front kitchen or 'house-part,' where the family were.

'Grandmother,' said Margaret, 'you wanted to see Ellen in her wedding-dress.'

'Wedding-dress!' replied the old woman, dreamily, 'Ellen is not going to be wed: Ellen has no business to get wed; she's too nesh¹ and creechy to think of such a thing.'

'No, no—the dress in which she is going to church with us next week. You remember that you wished to see her in it. She has got it on, and she is come to show it you.'

'Aye, aye, I recollect. Come, Ellen, let me

¹ An old English word.

look at you.' Here the old lady drew the frail-looking girl close to her, and scanned her very intently from head to foot, but fixing her eyes more particularly on her fair face, with its complexion delicate as the most delicate flower. At length she said in her abrupt way,—'Ellen, do you know how bonny you are?'

'Why, granny,' replied Ellen, laughing, 'I know perhaps more than people fancy, but I don't know that I'm so bonny. I've never seen myself in the looking-glass; but I can form an opinion of my own looks: why, I could describe Margaret's features as well as you could, and I have as clear a picture of her in my mind as anybody can. But why are you staring at my face so, granny,—I can tell that,—you quite make me blush, ha! ha!'

'Ellen, girl,' said the old dame, 'thou lookest in thy dress right well; thou art as like an angel as I can picture; and thou'lt be one before very, very long.'

'Now, mother, interposed Mrs. Maxwell, 'you musn't talk in that way. You'll put Ellen out of spirits and do her hurt.'

'Ellen must be reminded—Ellen must be told. Old folks like me drop as the leaves from the tree, and it seems natural: but young people, blithe and full of life, can hardly think that they will wither at all.'

‘ Well, but it’s all fancy in you, mother ; you shouldn’t talk in that way on such serious matters ; you are but dreaming about them.’

‘ Fancies ! dreaming ! who has seen more of life and death than myself ? I have watched folks in their health and have tended many on their sick bed. I have seen death in all ages and in all places ; I have seen it in the infant in the cradle, in the man of strong arm and heart, and in the wayfarer of a long journey as he went out like a flickering candle ; I have seen it between the clean sheets and on the smooth pillow, and I have seen it in the hospital and on the battle-field, in the hot sun-light and beneath the freezing moon, in every terrible shape’—here she paused as if her mind was wandering back over definitely remembered scenes of misery and terror,—‘ and will you tell me I am no judge of its coming ? Mine will come soon, but Ellen’s will come first. I shall drop a tear over Ellen, old as I am, as she looks paler but bonnier even than she is now. That “last enemy” has passed me by many a time ; but he will come at last, and I am awaiting him in faith : he will seek Ellen sooner, for the good die young ; and roughly as he comes to many, he will come to her as a gentle friend. Come here, Bess’—here Bess came up to the old lady and licked her hand,—

‘poor Bess ! dogs have their sorrows as well as human beings. Now, girls, go, and do your work, and talk your talk ; but before Ellen goes, you must come back here, and sing for me.’

‘How silly grandmother is,’ said Margaret, as she was helping Ellen to take off the dress in the parlour,—‘how silly she is to talk in such a way to you ; but it is of no use trying to oppose her : she is of Scotch birth, and she has got something of that wild notion that she is gifted with a second sight. She dwells on it till she really believes it.’

‘Well, now, Margaret, listen, and I will tell you what I have fancied for some months past—I have never whispered it to you before,—I believe your grandmother is not far wrong in what she has said of me. I have felt latterly but weak and dull. I cannot walk as sharply as I could, and I am soon out of breath. My appetite has partly failed me, and my spirits are sometimes low. I suffer from perspiration at night, and I have a troublesome cough when I get up in the morning. It may all pass away as the warm weather comes ; but I am not sure whether your grandmother’s words may not prove true.’

Here the conversation was brought to an end by the entrance of half-a-dozen young

girls who had come to pay their respects to Margaret. They were some pupil-teachers, some senior scholars, in the school of which she had relinquished the charge; and they were welcomed with much warmth of salutation.

'Sit down,' said Margaret; 'I am very glad to see you: I was afraid we should never have met again.'

'Miss Maxwell,' one of them began, after they had all got seated, 'we have come with a very small present, which we hope you will receive; it has been subscribed for and purchased by your late pupils, and they have requested us to bring it to you for your acceptance: it is not very much in value, but it is a real token of affection and good wishes, as the inscription on it states.' Here she produced a very beautiful silver inkstand.

Presentations sometimes spring out of the fussy officiousness of a few busy-bodies rather than the merits of the recipient. Frequently, however, they are genuine tokens of affection on the one side as well as evidences of usefulness on the other,—memorials of days spent together in kindness and well-doing, and incentives to further diligence in the vocation of life. Many an one plods on his weary round of effort to benefit his fellow-creatures; and

seeing no fruit of his labours he begins to despair; when some acknowledgment of his services cheers him in his duties by telling him that he is not living in vain, and bids him gird up his energies afresh as though his warfare were not ended. Nay, instances are not uncommon where labourers in the Christian vineyard have left a particular sphere of duty unrecompensed, as they conceived, by any result of their endeavours, and seemingly unregarded by those around them,—when, after long years, they have received from a happy death-bed some memento of affection, in token of having sown, unknowingly and unobserved, the first seeds of religious impression on the heart of one who was now passing to rest in the matured growth of piety, and whom the sower had well-nigh forgotten.

‘Look here, Ellen; what a handsome ink-stand they have brought me! Are they not very kind?’

Ellen ‘looked’ by the touch: after handling it for a few seconds she pronounced it very beautiful, adding,—‘and it’s no more than you deserve, Maggie.’

‘You must tell them all at the school,’ said Margaret to the young girls, ‘how much I am obliged to them: you must say, I shall never forget their kindness as long as I live.’

'How are you going on in the school now?' inquired Ellen; this was a question which Margaret out of delicacy would scarcely have ventured to put. 'Are you comfortable and improving under your new mistress?'

'We hardly like to say,' one of the pupil-teachers replied; 'Miss Maxwell would not be pleased, perhaps, if we expressed dissatisfaction; but we are not so happy as we were, nor are we making the same progress as a school: at any rate, that is the opinion of most of us.'

'Is your mistress not kind?' inquired Ellen.

'She is sour and cross, and many of us think not well-informed.'

'Which of the managing visitors,' Margaret asked, 'come most frequently now?'

From this question she expected to gain some clue to the style of mistress that had been appointed.

'Dr. McThwacker comes often, and makes to us very long and pompous speeches, which we do not understand. Of the ladies we see most of Mrs. Meikle and Miss Flintoff, neither of whom is very agreeable. Lady Brierly is the best of them, but she has only been once.'

Margaret perceived immediately how matters stood in the school, but she tried to laugh off the complaints of the young girls. 'These are

only fancies,' she added; 'only go on: do not neglect your work; and you will find that every thing will settle down by degrees into its ordinary course.'

'I am going to the Training College in six weeks,' rejoined the eldest pupil-teacher, 'and when I come back in two years, I expect to find the school in a very different state from what it was when you left it, Miss Maxwell.'

The young ladies stayed and took tea, chattering away on a variety of topics. They then turned to the piano, and sang together several melodies, Ellen being their leader. As the evening advanced, they each partook of a little refreshment, which consisted of some elderberry wine well sugared and spiced with nutmeg, warmed and served up with sweet cake in small china tea-cups,—prepared in Mrs. Maxwell's best fashion; after which they left with kisses and mutual expressions of good-will.

Meanwhile, other visitors had arrived and foregathered into the 'house-part;' their object was individually much the same as that of the young girls,—to make some present to Margaret before her marriage, in token of their esteem. Mr. Charnock had brought a very elegant silver-mounted ivory paper-knife: Mr. Scragson a china bowl of antique device; and Jack Timbertoes an Indian idol with a big

stomach, which had been curiously cut out of some rare kind of wood. The three had arranged their presents on the table, and were taking the pipe of peace and a glass of ale with grandfather Maxwell and James, when Margaret and Ellen joined them.

'Why, Margaret,' exclaimed her mother, 'you're quite in luck; you see what presents your friends are bringing you!'

Margaret thanked them very warmly for their kindness.

'That there funny craytur,' Jack began, 'had nearly cost me my life: as our frigate was at anchor near one o' them haythen places, several on us went ashore for a spree, and I stole that little fellow for a lark out of what they called a temple; when swarms of half-naked blacks, like crows or beetles, rushed after us; and we just managed to put off in time, or we should have been murdered every man jack,—so folks said after. When we got out of their reach, didn't we just call them all sort o' names, as they stood shouting and throwing up their arms on the beach; but whether they knew what we meant, I can't say.'

'That piece of chany (china)' observed Mr. Scragson, following up Jack's tale, 'came to me from my mother, who was a sort of lady

and particular fond of crockery ; we had several things of the same kind which gentlefolks used to admire ; but my wife has broken 'em, or the children have broken 'em, or somebody has broken 'em. So I've brought this to Margaret, that it may not follow suit. Mrs. S. has no turn for old curiosities : she calls 'em vanities,—ha ! ha ! ha !

‘ Well, as you are all telling how you came by your presents,’ Mr. Charnock commenced in his turn, ‘ I will inform you how I came by mine. It was given me by a young sprig of nobility at Oxford, because I happened to stand his friend in a trifling matter. “ Here,” says he, “ take that, Charnock ; as I don’t intend to read many books in my lifetime, I shan’t want to cut the leaves of many,—so here, take this ! ” ’

‘ What was the little service you did him ? ’ inquired Mrs. Maxwell ; ‘ he was but a graceless young fellow, by his way of talking.’

‘ O bless you, that’s only the fun of those jokers. Very likely that youth became a Cabinet Minister. Well, what I did for him was something of this kind. One day I was near the College gates about noon, when I saw about half-a-dozen men standing in consultation around a piano, which seemed to be an object of interest. Dr. Globus, a well-known college

Don, whose mind might have been lost in a Greek fog or in the mists of logic, was the principal man of the party. He had met the piano and its bearers, and just as he was alongside of it, bang, bang, was heard from the inside. Dr. Globus immediately concluded that it was an "infernal machine"—a good deal of talk was then going on about that one in Paris—and he jumped away from it as far and fast as his little body would allow him. It so happened, too, that as I came up, another report was heard from the inside of the instrument, which startled still more the little doctor. He was for having it opened there and then, while he took his stand at some distance. But I saw that would not do. You know, Sergeant, and so does Mr. Scragson, how necessary presence of mind is in an emergency; so I took upon myself to declare there was no danger. "You see, sir," I ventured to suggest, "the instrument has been repaired and re-tuned, and from the over-tension of some of the wires they have given way and caused the report." "All right," I hailed the bearers—"all right—move on." Now what was it, think you? It was just this. The Dean of Christchurch, which was our College, had made an order that no hot lunches were to be served from the kitchen to any undergraduate. But such harem-

scarem roysterers as some of the young bucks were, would not be baulked,—so hot lunches they would have, just because they were forbidden. And in order to get them, they had procured an old empty piano-case, and smoking pasties, champagne, and soda-water, were duly transferred into College from a neighbouring confectioner's beneath its cover. Now, just as the piano came alongside Dr. Globus, off went the cork of a soda-water bottle—then another—then a third—till the learned scholar thought it an “infernal machine.” If the young sprig of nobility to whose rooms it was going had been detected in the manoeuvre, he would have come to grief; so, in return he gave me this paper-knife, saying at the same time that he intended to pass through life without bothering himself with books whether cut or uncut.’

CHAPTER XIII.

WISE SAWS AND MODERN INSTANCES.

‘THAT Greek scholar,’ observed Jack sententiously, carrying on the conversation, ‘didn’t know much about gunpowder, or he’d ha’ known as how it would ha’ shivered the pihano into subdivisions. He hadn’t smelt as much gunpowder smoke as you and me, Sergeant.’

‘No, Jack, like enough; he had his own proper place, you see,—Providence gives each of us our proper place.’

‘Everything,’ said Jack, ‘is made as it should be: everything is cut out for its place, truer than Jerry Applebaum the tailor can cut out the breeches he makes. Providence can shape and formal us all, and gate us to our looms, better than a factory overlooker.¹ Well now, Sergeant, look here, and I’ll give you the chapter and verse, the A B C on’t. What was them long legs of your’n made for? As for walking, you cavalry chaps wabble about like geese on a turnpike

¹ Gateing a loom—setting it agate (agoing),—a common Lancashire expression.

road ; as for mounting the rigging in a gale, your clumsy bare poles would flap about like a main-sail broke loose : but your cluntering giblets did very well on the sides of a horse. Then there is Mr. Scragson here : he's a dacent hand with his neives ; he can knock up a carcase with a cleaver or a raggamuffin down with his mawley ; but he'd ha' come off second best in a bout wi' broadswords. And here's Mr. Charnock—the sensiblest man in Mudlington,—he al'ays in his talk hits atween wind and wayter—who has seen the world,—he's fit for owt but feighting ; he'll be a common Scoundreller some day, and maybe Mayor after a bit. Then there is this little chap at Oxford College who was flayed (frightened) with a bottle o' pop, and thowt it wur gunpowder in a wooden box ; why, if you had put a sword in his fist and mounted him on the Sergeant's charger, a cooraseer, I'm afeard, would ha' gin him his gruel in a hand-to-hand tussle. And, by the same token, the lumpy roundabout would ha' bin as bothersome as a rolling tub on deck. But he was what you call a phlos'pher ; he could talk in Lat'n and Greek, like a book ; he could explain magic and science ; he could chop logic as deftly as Mr. Scragson can a carcase ; he could lectur' on matthew-matics and trigernometry and bigamy, as readily as a

teetotaler on drinking, Now, I was a top-hand on a frigate; but I'm afeard I never could ha' bin a phlos'pher; I've a firm belief I never could ha' studied out these difficult points o' larning; I don't think I could ha' lectured gradely to them young chaps at College. As true as I'm alive, Mr. Charnock, I don't think I ever could ha' done it, like a good scholar.'

'Well, Jack,' said Charnock, laughing, 'you might have been brightened up into a kind of steel polish by an Oxford rubbing; but I don't think I should have booked you for a "double first." You were better placed, as you have so sensibly argued, on the quarter-deck.'

'What else was Jack fit for?' asked the old lady, shaking herself from her moody study. 'A blue-jacket is born to be a blue-jacket,—he's fit for nothing else.'

'And why not, dame?' asked Jack. 'Come now, and tell us in a mild way; don't throw out your cross words edgeways; you are al'ays so franzy, ill-tempered grandmother.'

'Why, you don't live in this world; you live on the water; you're shut out from human beings; you are cooped up like sheep in hurdles or hens in a hen-pen.'

'Now, missus, you're pretty 'cute when you're in a good temper, and willing to think like a rasonable body; but here you're quite in

the dark,—you're living in your cellar underground. Why, who can see more than us sailors of all parts? Didn't we get out and have our sprees in forin towns and show the natives a trick or two? We see'd a vast sight more of the world than you landsmen, who had to clunter like clodhoppers from place to place on dry land. Didn't we, think you, dame? So now, then.'

'See the world! A pretty come off, that! When in a port, you would have leave to go on shore, get drunk, and be wheeled back on a barrow. Is that seeing life, eh? Then you go roystering about, singing "Rule Britannia" and silly sea-songs by Dibdin. You're plucky enough when you're shouting in a chorus something about "Britons never, never, never being slaves," but I don't see that you come into much danger from fighting.'

'Now, don't talk so, dame,' said the Sergeant, 'you know better; you seem to think it good fun to tease and pester Jack. It isn't right: Jack has gone through many dangerous actions.'

'No pluck wanted,' said Jack, scratching his head, 'no pluck wanted, eh? When cannonballs are whizzing about your lugs and splinters are flying about like feathers! and then there's summat called cutlass work which will try a

fellow's pluck. But it's al'ays your way, grandmother; you're so fond of poking your fun at us blue-jackets. Never mind: you were happen axeing where we was when Boney was pottering about that coast that lies ower anenst us. Now, we were al'ays about the right spot, dame; we kept our weather-eye open; we knew where to be spying for our game; we were never catched asleep as you and Lord Wellington was at Waterloo.'

'Nothing of the kind, Jack,' said the Sergeant, peremptorily; 'everything was ready for Boney; and the two battles were fought as Lord Wellington intended.'

'Well, I've he-ard, Sergeant, as some of you had a desperate splutter to get up to Quarter Brass in time.'

'All nonsense, Jack,—only sharp marching. Soldiers are not carried through a campaign on feather-beds.'

'No, that wouldn't do, Sergeant,' said Scragson,—'you knew your game better than that. What weight were you when you were in fighting trim?'

'Fourteen stone, as near as possible, without an ounce of spare flesh.'

'You must have been an uncommon fine man then, Sergeant.'

The Sergeant ventriloquised something inar-

ticulate, pulled up his black stock, and stroked his whiskers, but did not speak.

‘Wasn’t he a fine-looking man, dame, as he was on his charger, and in his regimentals?’ asked Scragson.

‘Well,’ she said, as though stirred up a little by the thought, ‘he was. I saw him as he rode to battle at Waterloo, and there weren’t many to match him. I watched Lord Wellington, too, as he rode by; and while his eyes were about him, there wasn’t a movement of his features: for ought that was going to happen, his face might have been cut out of a block of marble.’

‘Welly (well-nigh) licked that day, Sergeant,’ said Jack, who wished to retort on the red-coats,—‘a touch-and-go business, warn’t it?’

‘All nonsense!—all nonsense! If the Prussians had not come up, we should have held our ground on that day; we should have made the French retreat; but of course the rout would not have been so complete.’

‘Now, Mr. Charnock,’ asked Jack dubiously, ‘do you think Waterloo comes up to Trafalgar? Isn’t it a grander job to smash a French fleet than Boney’s army?’

‘Well, as you have just said so like a philosopher, every man was in his place. Nelson would have bungled if he’d had to lead land forces, and Wellington very likely would have

been at sea, every way, if he'd had to manage a fleet.'

'Just so, Maester Charnock, you al'ays talk wi' sound sense.'

'Jack, said Mr. Scragson, abruptly, 'you've seen many wonders in the world; did you ever set eyes on the Say Sarpent?'

'I don't know exact; I a'most think I did once. I was keeping watch on deck one moonlight night, and I'm afeard I just dozed away to sleep. You know, if I'd been found out, I should have catched paddy-whack. But no matter,—just as I started up, I seed, as I thowt, a big animal wi' large fiery een looking at me over the gunwale on the starboard; but when I stirred up it dashed away like mad, and went off with an awful plunge among a shower o' foam. Now whether I wur dreaming I conno' just tell; but I have some opinions of my own about it. Next day we came in with a French frigate, and we had a roughish burst with it.'

'I wonder,' said the old lady in a quaint, joking tone, 'whether Jack was ever in love?'

'What is it to you, dame,' asked the Sergeant, in a half-serious way, 'whether Jack was ever in love? it is in his own bosom.'

'Why, I think he'd have a queer way of going about it. He would shape pretty fairly

on ship-board, but I wonder how he would make love.'

'It's a long time, dame, since either of us wur troubled with that disorder. We must leave it to Miss Maxwell here.'

'But you had just a slight touch of it once, Jack?' said Mr. Charnock.

'Well, I'm not sure, any more than about the Say Sarpent; but I once felt rayther queer about a young woman as I met with on shore. I was all of a wittery tittery like; I couldn't make it out. Says I to Bill Jumps, my mate, "What is it, Bill?" "Love," says he, "and no mistake!" "Then what am I to do?" "O," says he, "there's no good in being afeard,—brush at her at once; she'll maybe strike her colours, and give in, at the first brush." But it never came to that. She was taken ill, poor lass, and died of a plurality.'

'Plurality? a queer complaint that,—parsons die of it sometimes,' said Charnock; 'you haven't quite hit the name.'

'Well, it was something like it,—it was a sort of a perplexity.'

'A common complaint, Jack?'

'No, an appleplexity.'

'O, you mean apoplexy, and paralysis for plurality.'

'Well, it may be: I never was good at long

words somehow; I never could mak' 'em out any more than I could unloose what we used to call at say the tom-fool's knot, or could understand a parson's lectur' when it's stuck full o' big words, which are likely every minute to catch in his throttle and choke him.'

'Jack got on well enough,' said the Sergeant, 'without long words. When a lad he learned all that was necessary for his work.'

'Never had much larning, Sergeant.'

'By-the-bye, Jack,' said Charnock, 'I never heard where you were born and brought up, or anything about your parents or family. There is nothing to give offence, is there, in asking you about these things?'

'No offence, sir, whatsomedever. I was born about three miles from here, at Cumpsdale; my fayther was a hand-loom weaver, and made a vast o' money; but both my fayther and mother wur careless and reckless, and browt up their childer, three lads and one lass, without a thought of good. My fayther was a terrible radical, and would ha' pulled George off his throne and have settled the hash of big folk, all in a heap. He used to hide (thrash) us soundly for nowt: so I ran off to Liverpool, and as a lad went a voyage or two on a merchant vessel. Lads often run away now; but it is not al'ays their fault, more the

pity! Then I went into the navy, and served my country there for more than forty year. When I left my ship, I did not fix on any place better to come to than here.'

'Did you find any of your family remaining?

'No, I could not hear of one; they had all gone, I expect.'

'And I suppose you don't know of any descendants now?'

'Well, now, Mr. Charnock, you there axe me a question I'm afeard to meet. Of them as belong to me I only know of one living, and her case, to tell you the truth, is a sorry one to me: it has made me pipe my eye mony a neet when I've been i' bed. But I'll tell you what it is, and maybe I can get some comfort and advice from you.'

'We will help you, Jack,' said Charnock, 'if we can.'

'Well, about three months sin' I was walking home in a main street about eight or nine o'clock, when a young woman comed up to me, and would speak. "Go away," says I, "and leave me; I want nothing with you." "No," says she, "I want to say a word to you. You're my uncle—I'm your sister's daughter—Katty Cleary's."

'A woman's jest, maybe.'

'No, it wasn't. I soon found that she was

the daughter of my sister. She had the jaded, haggard look of these poor critturs, and was tried hard enough, though they do not let on that they are in a weary case. She did not stop many minutes with me, but stepped briskly away as if every thing wur lightsome with her. But it wasn't so, as I see'd plain enough.'

'Well, what can you do, Jack?' asked the Sergeant.

'Dunno' know, I'm sure. I'm not clever at such things; when I'm moidered, I never can make out what to do.'

'You want to reclaim her, I suppose?'

'I' course.'

'Jack,' said Miss Maxwell, 'your best plan would be to go at once to Mr. Monkhouse. He will do what he can for you, I'm sure; and he's a director of a private Home of Refuge near Yarndale. Then Mr. Shorland will help you, and Mr. Graham: but go first to Mr. Monkhouse.'

'That's good advice, Miss Maxwell,' said Charnock; 'it will give trouble to Mr. Monkhouse; but really the young man, though come, as I have reason to know, of a high family, and himself greatly distinguished at Oxford, seems to think nothing a trouble if he can be of service to any one, however poor.'

‘Thank you, Miss Maxwell,’ said Jack; ‘thank you heartily,—I’ll not forget it. But the whole matter welly makes me greet; and I don’t come here to snuffle and cry. So at present let us just talk about summat else.’

‘Coming back to what you’re clever in, Jack,’ said Mr. Charnock, wishing to change the subject, ‘they say that your Victorys and Royal Sovereigns that went so bravely to work at Trafalgar are now out of date and are only fit for firewood. What do you say to that, Jack?’

‘What do I say? Why, it’ll be Old England’s ruin, and no mistake. I’ll tell ye what, Master Charnock, I’m fit to cry like a child when I pictur’ to my mind a beautiful frigate with her sails set and her colours flying, maybe going straight into action,—and then think of these things with their smoky chimlies, like a factory afloat, grunting and puffing with their steam-engines;—it’s running in the face of Providence, for what are winds for, but to fill ships’ sails? As to fighting with engines and chimly-tops and paddles and screws,—it’s all gammon, sir. It’ll be Old England’s ruin,—that’s what I say.’

‘Things change, Jack,’ Sergeant Maxwell remarked; ‘they have got guns now that will

carry four or five miles, they say, and such as nothing can stand: if that be true, there won't be as much hand-to-hand fighting as there was in my day.'

'You'll be sorry for that,' observed Charnock; 'for they say you were a first-rate swordsman, Sergeant.'

'Yes, I was a fair hand—very fair; I have had many a tussle, and have not been often worsted. I have had bouts with Shaw and Ewart and Thornton, and others as good as they were; and I haven't often come off second best.'

'You had a hard day at Waterloo, hadn't you?'

'Yes, pretty well—pretty well; we had just a breathing on the 16th at Quatre Bras, and on the 18th we had it out.'

'Them cooraseers,' interrupted Scragson, 'rather bothered you, Sergeant, didn't they?'

'Aye, at the first we couldn't make 'em out; they took us a little by surprise, and they turned a lighter regiment or two. You must remember that the cavalry on that field was the finest Boney ever led on, and they were brave fellows both to look at and to encounter; but when heavy troops came against them, and we got used to their way of fighting, we taught

'em what English swords can do against helmets and breast-plates.'

'A queer sort of fighting, on horseback, isn't it?' asked Scragson; 'give me firm footing, if I've to fight.'

'All lies in the swordsman's art. Why, bless you, sir, horses are fighting and men are fighting all together. The old trooper I last rode—and a finer fellow never carried a saddle—would fight like a Christian.'

'Fight like a Christian, father!' exclaimed Mrs. Maxwell; 'why, that's an odd way of talking. Ha! ha! Christians, you know, shouldn't fight at all.'

'Christians not fight!' retorted the old soldier,—'I say it's a Christian duty to fight on proper occasions. Did not our country order us to fight? Did not Lord Wellington lead us on? Had we not to put down Boney, who was a disturber of all the nations upon earth? Yes—I have no doubt in my own mind whatever—it was our duty as Christian men to fight the French at Waterloo,'—and now the old soldier looked fierce, and grasped the elbow of his chair as though it had been his sword.

Here there was a pause in the conversation. Sergeant Maxwell had settled the point of casuistry more summarily than moralists and metaphysicians mostly do, and a general silence

seemed to imply acquiescence in his dictum. After a while the old lady, as if waking up from a reverie, stretched herself, and began somewhat sharply, 'Mr. Scragson, answer me a question.'

'Yes, dame, a dozen if you like.'

'Then, why did your folks have you christened by the name of Job?'

'Ha! ha! ha! I think I can tell you, missus. I've sometimes wondered at it myself; but I've a pretty good guess how it was. You see, dame, I was a particular nice little babby—ha! ha! ha! and as I was lying on my mother's arm with my round, bonny, chubby face, she said, says she, this infant is the most patientest creatur' as ever was; and my god-fathers and godmothers said the same; and they all were certain that I should be the most patientest man as ever lived; and so they agreed to call me Job, and I was so christened, missus,—that's how it was. Ha! ha! ha!'

'Then your mother and your sponsors were bad judges; they were neither prophets nor conjurors, Job Scragson.'

'Why so, dame? How you talk!'

'Why so? How I talk! Did Job ever fight at election times?'

'Job was never provoked as I was at election times, missus. Maybe Job never was at a

Council election. Why, a man may be patient in moderation you see, and yet have a turn-up just now and then in a good cause and for a friend; you won't deny that, I'm sure, dame. Why I see'd last week the funniest come off with a Catholic priest as you could fancy, and you know priests and parsons are all nearly as patient as Job—ha! ha! ha! Well, you know Father O'Hagan—that broad-set priest as licks his roughs into order. There was a row going on in Little Ireland about a wake or something of that kind, and about twenty of his flock—lambs of his flock, missus, ha! ha!—were fighting away like heigh-go-mad. Now, what he do? Did he reason with 'em? He appealed to their feelings, dame: for he went up to a cripple that was propped up on crutches against a wall, and took his crutches from him, and he began to belabour the fighters as if he was using two flails, till every one of them ran off like fun, when he gave back again to the cripple his crutches as if nothing had happened. Now Father O'Hagan is a patient man; but, you see, he will use what they call physical force in a good cause. So would Job, dame.'

'You're a long way off being a Job, Mr. Scragson.'

'In some things I know, dame. For in-

stance, Job had but a queerish sort of a wife; now mine is first-rate.'

'Who says so, Job Scragson?'

'Why, I say so, missus. Don't you see that while I do all the butchering, she does all the religion; and I expect, being man and wife, we shall go share and share alike. That's fair cutting up, isn't it, dame? Ha! ha! ha!'

'Your wife, Job, is no better than an old cackling sitting goose, and her Bethesda minister is a dirty rascalion of a shoemaker, who would not trouble you as much as he does, if you'd let him go home with an empty belly and a dry mouth.'

'But,' interposed Charnock, 'Mr. Scragson has attended Mr. Monkhouse's evening service sometimes, and is likely to go regularly there, I expect.'

'Yes, yes, I've been, it is true, but all in the way of business. Mr. Monkhouse gets his meat from me, and he seems to be a young man as wants a little encouragement. Then, I like to hear Ellen there sing. You mustn't think I mean to deprive Mrs. S. of her full due, in making us both safe—ha! ha! ha!'

'Begging pardon,' Jack struck in, 'I want to axe Miss Maxwell a question about Job—for I like to know as I goo on,—had Job a wooden leg?'

‘I never heard that he had, Jack. Why do you ask?’

‘Well, them chaps as had me down, and were a lecturing me on Christian principles, said I was in the case of Job. Now, the hollo-baloo was all about wooden legs, and the mischief mainly came of my wooden leg: so if Job hadn’t a wooden leg, what business had they to talk in thatness?’

‘Certainly,’ said Mr. Scragson, ‘the mischief came from Jack’s wooden leg coming like a mason’s mallet on Mr. Bompas’s stomach. Whenever I axe him how he is, he puts his hands afore him and shakes his head. He’s taken lots of boxes of everlasting pills, but his disgestion, he fears, is gone for ever. Ha! ha!’

‘His disgestion!’ sneered Jack, ‘a dirty hypocrite! Who cares about his disgestion? I don’t, choose how. He met me one day, and started on me with his free gospul, as if I was some reprobate, when I let him know a bit of my mind.’

‘What was that, Jack?’

‘Well, I said that if he would mind his own business, he’d have enough to do. It’s only a fortnight since he was lawed for debt. Mr. Scragson, would you take all his talk about a free gospul as a good surety for a five-pound note?’

‘Why, no—not exactly, ha! ha! ha! Not if I know it, Jack—not if I know it.’

Like Falstaff’s tailor, Mr. Scragson ‘liked not the assurance.’

‘What say you, Mr. Charnock?’ inquired Jack.

‘You know, we must not be uncharitable, Jack; but, on the whole, I should prefer the money to the bond. A bird in the hand, remember.’

‘You remarked, Jack,’ said Scragson, ‘that he had law in his house a fortnight since. Did you hear what a capital trick he played off on the occasion? I rather like Bompas in some things. He then showed presence of mind, and, a touch of genius. You know very well, Sergeant, nothing can be done in difficulty without presence of mind.’

‘A great point in action,’ replied the campaigner; ‘Lord Wellington never lost his.’

‘Aye, and Bompas showed genius too,’ Scragson went on. ‘You may think, Mr. Charnock, that your Latin and Greek friends have all the genius in the world: they don’t pocket the whole of it. There is genius in a barber’s shop, sir, there is genius among a chandler’s bacon and tallow, or among a pawnbroker’s old petticoats and blankets,—as much as in what you call your ’Varsities. Why

bless you, I have seen as much genius at a prize-fight, or a wrestling ring, or a horse-race, as you could find in the House of Commons.'

'But what has that Bompas to do with genius?' asked the old lady sharply; 'he came to me to talk about a free gospel, and I told the grunting bull rather to keep at home and mind his shop, and not make himself a fool.'

'Yes,' replied Scragson, 'but you see, dame, genius is close akin to foolery. Well, I will tell you how he showed his presence of mind and his genius, when the sheriff's officer was in his house. He turned his tongue-exercise in religion to a good account. "Would you," says he to the lawman, "just mind a nice little comfortable prayer before we begin business?"' "Well," said the man, "it isn't much in my way: I haven't studied such things in particular, but there can be no great harm in it as I see.' So Bompas goes to work like a good one, strong and hearty; and you know what a trumpet he sounds; on he went, till the man got tired with kneeling; on he went, praying louder and louder; till the man began to have his suspicions that there was something wrong from certain sounds which he heard not very far off. Now, how did it turn out, think ye? The sheriff's officer rushed from the room, and caught some people hastening off with the

furniture out of the back door, while Bompas was drowning all noise by his rumgumtious prayer. Well, now, wasn't there presence of mind in this, Sergeant? And wasn't there genius, too, missus?'

'Genius wrong side out,' muttered the old lady.

'Miss Maxwell,' said Charnock, after Scragson's narrative, 'I have to ask a question of you. Have you heard whether there is not a bit of courtship going on between Mr. Monkhouse and Miss Shorland? Is it true, can you tell?'

'I'm sure I cannot say. I hope it is, Mr. Charnock.'

'Yes, but here,' interposed Jack, 'as I've he-ard, Mr. Monkhouse has no right to get married; he's a Fellow of Oxford College, and they've no more liberty to get wed than Popish priests. How is it, Mr. Charnock, for you're a 'Varsity man?'

'They can't both marry and keep their Fellowship, Jack; that would never do. But many of them are willing to give up their Fellowship for a ladyship. One good thing at a time, you know.'

'Well, I like to hear that. I thought they were under a vow like; and them chaps as is under a vow never to get wed, never does no good. Take my word for it.'

So the evening crept on. At length, Ellen and Margaret, in compliance with a general request, sang Keble's evening hymn, 'Sun of my soul,' and the company separated in a pleasant mood.

CHAPTER XIV.

LOVE-KNOTS, PRESENT AND PROSPECTIVE.

THERE are epochs in the life both of man and woman which serve to measure existence. Years roll round so smoothly, that, even if the varying seasons create a trifling ruffle on the surface of time, the stream soon absorbs it in its calm current. Startling events, therefore, are eras that serve, as it were, to arrest old Time in his flight, and to put a stamp on his naked shoulders ; they are milestones in the pilgrimage of life whereby duration is measured, and memory aided, in revivifying the evanescent figures in the darkening twilight of the past.

Jacob Shorland had now reached a most memorable epoch in his life. He had passed through the ordinary incidents that mark duration. He had donned his first pair of trousers ; he had been sent one gloomy morning for the first time to school ; he had received his first flogging ; he had sold his first bale of goods ; he had signed, *O læta dies!* the deed of his

partnership in the paternal establishment; and now Jacob was going to be married—perhaps the most momentous crisis of all.

Jacob was dressing himself with more than usual care. Commonly he did not sacrifice much time or attention to the graces. This morning he pruned his whiskers; he arranged his hair artistically; he smoothed down his white waistcoat, beneath which his heart was gently palpitating; he glanced admiringly at himself in the glass; he tied his white neck-cloth with some trepidation preparatory to a less dissoluble knot before the altar. O joy! O fear! Before twelve o'clock Miss Brierly will be his, till death does them part. The Judge Ordinary, we are sure, will never be called in as the Alexander of the Gordian knot. Men and women often blunder into marriages without much thought. 'Folks wed in haste, and rue at leisure,' is a Lancashire proverb. But even into the thinking mind—one not positively overwhelmed with the overflowings of love—some distracting thoughts surely must intrude in the anticipation of being linked to another for a lifetime. Should the lady not prove so amiable as she has hitherto seemed to be! Should there be incompatibility of temper, as the world calls it, between us! Have I not occasionally caught a shadow suddenly crossing

her brow in the summer of courtship? What if it grew into a normal storm-cloud in the winter of wedlock? Beware, fair ladies, of those rapid changes of countenance from sunshine to shade: the momentary gloom indicates a disposition; the term *vultus* has its root in *volo*. What if my bright prospective pictures prove to be only visions of dreamland!

To wed! perchance to rue; aye, there's the rub:
 For in that wedded life what storms may come,
 When we have shuffled off our freedom's coil,
 Must give us pause,
 And make us rather bear those ills we have
 Than fly to others that we know not of.

Then, on the other hand, there is a reasonable prospect of domestic joys; there is the shadowy outline of children gathering round parental knees;

dulces occurrent oscula nati
 Præripere, et tacitâ pectus dulcedine tangent.¹

There is the proud hope of becoming the progenitor of a distinguished line; there is that chiaroscuro group before you called in dim metaphor the bosom of an affectionate family, where youths and maidens appear in a graduated scale, descending to the last-born on the knee of its father, stretching forth its little hands by way of recognition, and exhibiting its awaken-

¹ Lucret. III. 908.

ing perceptions by pleasant smiles—*patrem cognoscens risu*. Marriage, like medals—indeed, like everything else—may be viewed on two sides. So pluck up heart of grace, friend Jacob, and on with your coat.

‘Now then!’ shouted Frederick Shorland, who had come to escort his brother to the place of execution, ‘don’t be all day over your dressing, Jacob; the carriage is ready, and it is nearly time to start.’

‘Well, well—be quiet, be quiet; you are so impatient, so very impatient; patience is a virtue, brother—patience is a virtue.’

‘Yes, but suppose you’re too late, and the bird escapes? Such things have happened.’

‘Hem! no—all in good time; take my advice—never do anything in a hurry, brother, when you can do it leisurely. You lose steadiness of mind by bustle. In your bargains and dealings, brother, you had better recollect that maxim—you are too impetuous generally in your business affairs.’

‘What on earth have we to do with business or bargains this morning? I believe if you were foundering in the Atlantic Ocean you would be thinking about your grey cloths.’

‘Bargains, brother!—is not marriage a bargain—and a very serious bargain too?’

‘Why, surely, you would not speak of the

lady as though she were a bale of cotton—though perhaps you cannot treat her more affectionately than you would the raw material, if it were a good bargain.’

‘A lady, brother, is flesh and blood—a lady is not a cotton-bale—a lady is not dry goods—but is not marriage a contract for all that? Some call it a civil contract—I consider it a religious contract. It is a sort of contract by exchange. The gentleman says, “I take you,” and the lady says, “I take you;” it is a sort of give-and-take contract; and what makes it a serious one, brother, it is lives apiece.’

‘Well, come along; don’t be all day adorning yourself, or you’ll be too killing. Take a cup of coffee before you start; for I see you are not half up to the mark.’

‘Stay, brother, I want to ask you a question. You have to arrange all the payments for me, you know; what do you intend to give the clergyman? The fee, you recollect, is 15s.; but I don’t mind a trifle more.’

‘I shall give him a 5*l.* note, Jacob. You would not have one of the firm of Shorland and Co. married for less, I expect. You must remember, too, that you are uniting yourself with a knightly family—that you are taking to yourself the daughter of an ex-mayor and present alderman—that you are linking your

own name with one that is high in the commercial annals of Yarndale.'

'Well, yes, yes—but 5*l.* is too much, brother—too much. I have no desire to be stingy. I wish to be liberal. I think two guineas is a fair and reasonable present. I have here two spade-ace guineas. I think they would be quite enough—and two spade-ace guineas would be something out of the common way for a gift—don't you think so?—something unique, eh?'

'You have nothing to do this morning with the cash account, Jacob. Forget finance in your love dalliances for one day. I shall give 5*l.* Depend on it, old Dr. Bellows will like a modern 5*l.* note better than two ancient guineas.'

Jacob Shorland looked with a commercial eye upon everything in life; we need not, therefore, be surprised if he regarded marriage from a mercantile point of view. He considered that the lady was likely to make a very good wife for him, and he thought correctly: he had, in warehouse phrase, 'taken the stock' of her; he was convinced that she had no expensive habits, and that she had a reasonably quiet temper; he beheld himself in perspective as the head of a household, growing stout, with a family of young Shor-

lands about him and a motherly mate as their guide. Jacob loved becomingly and reflectively—not too ardently, like a fire among thorns; he loved as it would last. And if we were to analyse the feelings of the bride, we should find them very much akin to his. ‘Mr. Jacob is a very nice prudent young man; he knows the value of money, and he will soon keep his carriage and pair; he has no wild, wicked, harum-scarum propensities like many of these graceless runagates; he will make a good husband, I am sure, and I am fortunate in my engagement.’

Now, all this is very prosaic, you may say; it is not the way ladies and gentlemen ought to get married. But is there not something of real life in it after all? How is it with your men of burning affection every day? Is there not evidence sufficient in those breach of promise cases that from time to time come into our courts of justice, and turn simple beings inside out, as they are creaming in the effervescence of love? What red-hot emotions are placed upon paper—fiery as the car of Phæton and destructive of that world called reason. But this cannot last; the fire becomes ashes and the heart stone. Reflect, then, when your lover begins to indite verses about the moon and the stars and two hearts being melted into one;

when he represents himself as a walking sigh in the gentle eventide, and makes dove rhyme to love, bid him beware; send him a cooling powder; moderate his ardour by a wet blanket. Love, when too intense, consumes itself like the materials in a lime-kiln. Then come a re-action of the system and an action for breach of promise. The gentleman whose heart had once been on fire, but is now in the ashes of spontaneous combustion, is mulcted in 500*l.*, and the lady who had once been encircled by the torrid zone, but who now walks in an icy atmosphere, very coolly sets up a greengrocery with the money.

But we must return to Jacob, who is now fortifying himself with a cup of tea and a slice of ham. The preliminaries of his marriage were thus far advanced; but they had not reached their present stage without certain difficulties of arrangement and sundry diplomatic conferences. Where were the couple to be married? Who was to marry them? According to what ceremony was the marriage service to be performed? Sir Timothy and Lady Brierly did not themselves object to the rites of the Established Church: perhaps, in their hearts they preferred that the marriage should be solemnised according to its forms. But then, how would Dr. McThwacker take it?

In what light would the Independent interest regard it? What would Mrs. Meikle, Miss Flintoff, and their friends, say about it? On the other hand, Mr. and Mrs. Shorland would not willingly have consented to the marriage being celebrated in a Conventicle: for though the old gentleman did not trouble himself much about rites and ceremonies, he had no great love for those ‘prosing, snuffling chapel folks, who would pray you deaf on Sunday and *do* you in a bargain on the Monday.’ Frederick Shorland ridiculed the idea of going with Jacob to the Meeting House. Miss Shorland was luckily, perhaps purposely, away from home at the time. Here, then, were questions for discussion of great interest and importance. But diplomacy now stepped in, and matters after some negotiation were satisfactorily arranged—at least, so far satisfactorily as to silence overt complaining. It was agreed that the ceremony should be performed in the parish church of Yarndale by Dr. Bellows, the Vicar, a dignitary of some eminence; but that his functions should cease in the church, and that Dr. McThwacker should be the presiding genius at the breakfast table. Dr. McThwacker in his heart considered that all this was an evidence of the bondage of his party to the dominant Church; but, with the exception of sundry sly shrugs and grimaces,

he did not venture to express an opinion on the question, and the arrangement on the whole was generally considered to be fair and equitable.

And now the brothers Shorland are face to face with Dr. Bellows in the spacious vestry of the Yarndale parish church, awaiting the bride with her attendant train. Jacob's courage is slightly oozing away; his coolness of calculation is in some degree failing him. Is it not singular that he who would have held his ground stoutly against a dozen gladiators in a commercial arena, should now exhibit symptoms of distraction and alarm at the approach of half a dozen beautiful women? And yet he is not feigning a perplexity for a purpose, as he might have done in a bargain; for when Dr. Bellows with dignified civility wished to hang up for him his hat, Jacob thanked him, but said that it had slipped through the floor in a crevice between the boards, though he was holding it in his hand.

'I am happy,' said the Doctor, 'to have to perform this ceremony for you, Mr. Shorland. I shall be uniting two important houses in the commerce of Yarndale.'

'Thank you, sir—thank you, sir,' replied Jacob—'much obliged to you, I'm sure—very much—but—but—trade is only slack just now

—cotton is very high—very high—so is the bank discount—hem ! ’

‘ And may I not expect the pleasure of having to do the same for you, Mr. Frederick, ere long ? ’ continued the Doctor, as he was coolly robing himself in his canonicals and tying on his bands and combing his whiskers before the looking-glass. ‘ An unmarried man, Mr. Frederick, is only half a man, you know. ’

Dr. Bellows was a fine courteous old gentleman, but he had in truth a keen eye to business. With kindness and dignity he combined a slight weakness for fees and five-pound notes.

‘ I should consider it a peculiar pleasure, ’ the Doctor proceeded, as he was adjusting his hood and scarf, ‘ in having to contribute to the happiness of one who is so good a Churchman and so practical a Christian as you are, Mr. Frederick. We hear of your efforts in Mudlington from all quarters, and consider you the pattern of what a mercantile man ought to be. I hope your church and schools are progressing favourably. ’

‘ Your opinion is too flattering, sir. In comparison with many, I am doing but little. Everything, however, is going on satisfactorily, and in due time, I trust, a lasting impression will be made on the somewhat neglected district of Mudlington. ’

‘Yes, surely; you have a very praiseworthy object in view, and I do not doubt but that your efforts will be blessed. But your brother looks rather abstracted.’

Jacob, indeed, had been for some time trying to count the buttons of his waistcoat, as the schoolboy does by way of fortune-telling; but he had not fully succeeded. His perception of numbers seemed to be forsaking him.

‘But then,’ continued the Doctor, ‘it is no great wonder at such a time. I have seen many who have manifested still more decided symptoms of abstraction. To me, you know, this is a very commonplace event; but to those who come to be married it is a great incident in life, and much to be remembered as influencing their future career. It is the passing through a trying ordeal in order to secure a life of happiness—at least, that is the presumption, ahem! *Mors janua vitæ*, Mr. Frederick. This vestry, you may be assured, has been the scene of strong sensations. It is a large world in a small space—a microcosm, Mr. Frederick. My friend Cunningham, the Vicar of Harrow, wrote a book called “The Velvet Cushion”—perhaps you may have seen it—illustrative of the variety of doctrine that had been preached over it. Now, I think sometimes, I might write a volume called “The Vestry,”—it would

comprise much incident, and might be made a philosophic treatise, as analysing the emotions, while it would have enough of the sensational in it to suit the taste—the somewhat depraved taste, I admit—of the present day. What think you? Perhaps a young man like you might more properly undertake such a work. Your mental vigour and imaginative powers would more than compensate my enlarged experience.’

And now the cavalcade has arrived; the bride, bridesmaids, and the rest, proceeded up to the altar rails, and the two Shorlands took the places respectively allotted to them. It is wonderful with what fortitude ladies go through the ceremony, and with what calmness bridesmaids look on. Jacob was perplexed; the lady at his side stood steady and unembarrassed; while her mind was concentrated on the service, his seemed to wander away unaccountably, and when he was requested to respond, he found himself mentally at a distance. Some such sequence, or non-sequence of thought as this probably was passing through his brain. ‘Dear me! dear me! The warehouse is just about opening now: what are they going to do, I wonder, among the grey cloths?—a beautiful stained-glass window that—very beautiful—but I cannot quite make out the

figures—let me see, what was I thinking about? O, that customer from Halifax—stop—never mind customers just now—I have a very important bargain at this moment on hand—what an elegant dress that is!—that lace is of a very expensive material, I know—how much would all those dresses cost, I wonder? Marriage is a very proper thing—instituted in the time of man's innocency—but very, very expensive.' Then his thoughts were pulled up by being told to repeat certain words after the sonorous tones of Dr. Bellows: this he did mechanically; but, on coming to the promise of endowing his wife with all his worldly goods, he slightly faltered, and put in a mental reservation, and was then carried off again to his purchases and sales and manufactures and cargoes. On the other hand, Miss Brierly went through her part with all the steadiness of a well-seasoned drill-sergeant: ladies, we apprehend, generally rehearse their parts beforehand in the quiet of their own room.

After the ceremony was over the usual scenes took place in the vestry. The registers were signed, some going through the process with shaky hands, others dashing off their names with vigour and a flourish at the end; two or three irremoveable white kid gloves were spotted with ink; dresses rustled; pretty

speeches were made; tears were shed; kisses were distributed. Jacob embraced a lady or two at random, and then he kissed a pew-opener by mistake, who was sidling up to the party for her expected half-crown. She seemed to set but a small value on the salute; but she thanked Frederick Shorland for the honorarium he subsequently bestowed on her.

And now the party are at breakfast. Dr. Bellows is deposed, and Dr. McThwacker reigns supreme. How far the company have gained by the change of presidency may be a matter of taste. Dr. Bellows might have his weak points, but he was a gentleman, courteous and kind,—one who would have been most studious not to infringe on the prejudices of the most sensitive dissenter, when at a private breakfast with those who did not belong to his Church. Dr. McThwacker was not so delicate; he had much of that somewhat indefinite element in him which goes by the name of faithfulness.

The guests were assembled in Sir Timothy Brierly's dining-room—a spacious and somewhat imposing apartment, which had been the scene of much mayoral hospitality. In that room aldermen and common councillors had eaten of the fat—the green—and there speeches had been delivered of such thrilling interest as to be applauded in loud cheers and tempestuous

table-rapping. Now the party were less boisterous, but not less gay. The bride and bridegroom occupied prominent positions, with their attendant retinue of ladies and gentlemen. Sir Timothy was fidgetting about, letting off his crackers in the shape of small jokes, and seemingly in high spirits. Lady Brierly was gracious, and appeared to be well satisfied with the situation. Young Timothy sipped his champagne, and looked rather indifferent about the whole matter. Mr. and Mrs. Shorland, seniores, joined the company at breakfast. Miss Frumpington, who was Jacob's godmother, and from whom something testamentary was expected, had rolled up in her heavy carriage with one of the Misses Skirving. Then our old friends Mrs. Meikle and Miss Flintoff must not be unnoticed. Whether Miss Flintoff had been asked to join the church ceremony, we never heard; but, though at the breakfast, she had been certainly so far faithful to her purpose of never attending that State service again.

Dr. McThwacker soon began to eat with a vigorous appetite, and to talk from one end of the table to the other. His natural tone of mind and conversation was the didactic, and this had been confirmed by long habit; he assumed to himself the office of a teacher, not only in the pulpit but in the dining-room, and

now he was 'the Professor at the breakfast-table.'

'Do you not think, Mr. Shorland,' he inquired from a distance, ever harping on the same string, 'that we, as Nonconformists, are deprived of those liberties which ought to belong to Englishmen as a birthright?'

'You get fat on the deprivation, anyhow,' replied the old gentleman curtly; 'you thrive, Dr. McThwacker, on your loss; when I see one of these wizen-faced curates blow as good a cheek as you, Doctor, I shall think him well off.'

Mr. Shorland answered abruptly; in truth, he was in a bad humour. Whether some matter of business had gone wrong, or he had got up that morning rather bilious, he was evidently 'put out' at something; he even failed to pay to his new daughter those congratulations which etiquette and natural feeling required from him.

'That is another matter, Mr. Shorland—another matter entirely; some men get fat on little, others cannot thrive on nourishing food. Now, to take an example of what I mean, why should not I or any other minister of the Independent interest have had the privilege of marrying this dear couple in Yarndale parish church as well as an official of the State re-

ligion? Of course I am finding no fault, but I speak of it simply as a matter of principle.'

'Can a Church clergyman marry in your chapel?'

'No—that is true—nor would I officiate in an endowed edifice if I could; but why not sweep off all endowments, and place every party on a level?'

'What would you do with the money?'

'That is another question, sir: our Liberation Society has not yet fully discussed that subject—ahem!'

Discussion went on in a rugged, jagged manner; opposite views were expressed, and with some determination. Discussion was waxing warm for a wedding breakfast. Was the bride-cake to be cut in the midst of controversy? That would have been an evil omen. Mrs. Meikle and Miss Flintoff looked smilingly on the Doctor's remarks. Frederick Shorland was beginning to look savagely at him. Miss Skirving was suddenly taken with a fit of shortsightedness; and putting her glass to her eye, commenced a physiognomical study of the great man's countenance. Lady Brierly began to fidget uneasily on her chair and to wish the Liberation Society far away. Sir Timothy, deprecating this passage of arms, and having but little sympathy with his pastor

in the conflict, interposed with a view to create a diversion in favour of peace.

‘What have we to do with Liberation Societies this morning, Doctor?’ he said jokingly. ‘We have to drink the health of the bridegroom and the bride, with our best wishes for their future happiness. I wish we could lay all such things as Liberation Societies for a time, as they do ghosts, in the ocean—ha! ha! ha! It is hardly good taste to introduce such topics into conversation in general society—on an average.’

And now the Doctor arose with considerable gravity to propose the health of the newly-married couple. To use a common saying among his fraternity, he had ‘cooked something good for the occasion,’ and as *chef* he laid it before the guests with no little self-satisfaction. He spoke oracularly and sonorously; he emitted as much sound and worked up as much gesticulation as would have served for Exeter Hall and a thousand people inside it. He could testify, he said, with confidence to the excellent qualities of the bride, if anyone could; he had dandled her on his knee when a lisping infant; he had observed her ripening years; he had watched over the education of her expanding mind; he had trained the aspirations of her youthful heart; he had re-

ceived her as a promising member into his communion; he had witnessed her faithful life, her works and labours of love; and now he handed her as a jewel in its casket to the keeping of another. (Hear, hear.) Miss Flintoff here put her white cambric handkerchief to her eyes, and Mrs. Meikle blew her nose in a mournful minor key. The Doctor then launched out into a description of home happiness and domestic enjoyment, and predicted that his foster-daughter would achieve such a consummation in perfection, as being united with so deserving a character as Mr. Jacob Shorland. (Cheers.) He announced that on the following Sabbath he should improve the occasion by discussing the divine institution of marriage with its concomitant blessings, and he invited all who could attend his place of worship to do so. After a speech of great power and considerable length he sat down amidst applause, Mrs. Meikle, Miss Flintoff, and his immediate followers eyeing him with as much delight and devotion as if there had been something seraphic about his countenance.

Jacob made a short, practical, sensible speech in reply. He was now recovering his presence of mind; he had begun to be rather ashamed of himself in having been so far shaken from his ordinary firmness of will: he always prided

himself in never being caught napping in a bargain; though he dealt in woollens, his wits never went wool-gathering as he bought and sold. Not that, even now, he had quite come to himself again: at this time, he was somewhat perplexed with a 'Bradshaw,' out of which he was endeavouring to extract certain information about railway lines and timetables; but, as 'Bradshaw' would puzzle a senior wrangler, no wonder that it should seem difficult of analysis and interpretation to one who was just starting on his wedding tour.

The guests were not particularly well assorted, as the two religious confluences could scarcely be expected to possess the assimilative properties of amalgamation. Old Mr. Shorland was dry and caustic in his remarks; Frederick wished himself well out of the party; and Miss Skirving by some strange cantrap was placed between Miss Flintoff and Mrs. Meikle, when the wicked young minx, looking down upon her neighbours as unfit for genteel society, endeavoured in the blindest possible way to make herself particularly disagreeable. She asked Mrs. Meikle what she thought of a certain *prima donna* who was creating an excitement in some opera or other; she inquired from Miss Flintoff whether she did not admire very much the marriage service as used

in the Church of England ; and, when she was taken up by the two ladies on dissenting principles, she asked them in the most innocent manner to which interest they belonged, and whether they dipped or sprinkled in their communion ;—as for fasting, she scarcely thought their pastor set them an example of that. Indeed, Mrs. Meikle afterwards declared, that she was in charity with all the world, but that really she considered Miss Skirving the most impudent hussy on the face of the earth.

Still, there are few parties without some drawback, and taking all things into account, the breakfast passed off tolerably well. A certain amount of nonsense was talked ; but nonsense is a necessary and becoming ingredient at such gatherings ; it tends to carry off the heavy sense, as the light sandy elements of the soil, unproductive in themselves, impart by disintegration a degree of fertility to the more solid materials of marl and clay. Some inferior jokes were perpetrated, such as Mr. Punch would father on the Duke of Baden Baden ; but an atrocious joke is often useful as a foil against pomposity, stiffness, and silence.

And now Jacob and his lady started for the railway-station, and the old shoe, according to Lancashire custom, was thrown after them—

a custom which Dr. McThwacker pronounced to 'partake of superstition, and to be of doubtful propriety—but permissible—perhaps permissible—at such times as a pleasant jest.'

When Mr. and Mrs. Shorland, with Frederick, arrived at 'The Oaks,' there was no long delay before the old gentleman let them know what had been disturbing his temper. Sir Timothy Brierly had asked him just before the breakfast whether there were any truth in the reported engagement between Miss Shorland and the Rev. Mr. Monkhouse. He had entertained suspicions on that matter all along, and he had expressed them to Mrs. Shorland occasionally, as we have seen, though he had not been able to give any specific reasons for them or to fix upon any particular act or proceeding as justifying them.

'So, ma'am,' he began, 'what I have half suspected for some time, I have ground for thinking is true.'

'What, Mr. Shorland?'

'Is there not some engagement, actual or implied, between our daughter and that curate of Mudlington? Answer me that.'

'Has some one been telling you so at the Brierlys', Mr. Shorland? If so, the person scarcely deserves our thanks.'

‘No matter who has been telling me, ma’am—is it not true?’

‘Whether there be any attachment between Mr. Monkhouse and Alice, I cannot say; but if there had been any distinct engagement, I am quite sure I should not have been unacquainted with it.’

‘Yes, there it is, ma’am—I fancied why the girl would not have young Brierly—I suspected there was some other attraction.’

‘I do not think, Mr. Shorland, that young Brierly was a suitable match for her; I am not sorry from all I have heard that she refused him.’

‘Yes, there it is again, ma’am—and you would allow her to be thrown away on a beggarly curate living on alms in the beautiful place called Mudlington, eh?’

‘I cannot speak upon the matter with any certainty,—all I know is, that she did not like young Brierly, at which I do not wonder; but what her feelings towards Mr. Monkhouse may be, or his to her, I cannot say.’

Mrs. Shorland had certainly begun to suspect that there was a growing attachment between her daughter and Monkhouse, but she had received no definite information on the subject. Probably there had been no distinct declaration of feeling between the two them-

selves; but there was assuredly in their hearts a certain tacit perception of an increasing mutual attraction.

‘Hear me, ma’am,’ retorted the old gentleman through his teeth,—‘if the wench pleases to take up with a starving, miserable curate on 80*l.* a year paid from a charity, she must expect nothing from me. She must make up her mind to live on skilly and wash her own stockings.’

‘Excuse me, sir,’ interposed Frederick, ‘you are not taking a right view of Mr. Monkhouse’s position. As to the question now in dispute, I cannot speak of it from any knowledge I have about it; but in so far as Mr. Monkhouse’s rank in society is concerned, he stands far higher than ourselves. His father is a baronet of ancient lineage, and, I do not hesitate to say it, would be shocked at the idea of his children allying themselves with the families of merchants or tradesmen.’

‘A baronet of ancient lineage! What care I about his baronetcy or his ancient lineage? Probably as proud as Lucifer and as poor as Job.’

‘You are certainly mistaken, sir,’ replied Frederick, respectfully but firmly,—‘I imagine from what I saw that the annual expenditure of his establishment is ten or perhaps twenty

times that of yours, and I do not doubt but that he lives within his rental. He was county member for many years, and his eldest son now is; he holds a very high position in those parts; and, though too courteous to give expression to his feelings, I am quite sure that he would regard a Yarndale merchant or manufacturer as a very humble personage in comparison with himself.'

'What care I about his being county member or county anything else? A parcel of idle drones are all the set of them! Hunting and drinking and eating and swearing and sleeping! of what good are they to the country, sir? What were they born for, I wonder? Would the nation have been what it is, if it had been made up of these lazy good-for-nothings?'

'That is your view of the question, sir; but they think very differently: they have their duties to fulfil, as men have in every station of life; and they perform them on the whole as well as others.'

'Duties! What duties, but to receive the rents to which they were born, and to spend them like asses in gambling and drinking and sporting? What, I wonder, would such have done, if they had been thrown upon the world to make their own living? Would they have made their way, think you, as I have done?'

‘No doubt, sir, as a class they have as much energy, perseverance, and skill as other men.’

‘Then, look at the young noodle in Mudlington! Is he anything to boast of in his position, do you fancy? Who knows him in Yarndale? Who cares about him in Yarndale? Who has heard of him in Yarndale? Yonder he is, sir—neither very useful nor very ornamental, so far as I see—living on the wages of a light porter—visiting old women and supplying them with petticoats—himself no better than an old woman. Aye—there it is—there is the mischief,—all this comes of your peddling among the poor, and pretending to look after their wants, when they understand their own interests quite well enough, you may be sure! Mrs. Shorland has been much to blame as well as you: she has led this silly wench into such follies; she has brought her and this moping goose together; and now we see the upshot of it.’

‘The Rev. Mr. Monkhouse, sir, may not be much known in Yarndale; but I doubt whether he has any ambition to be much known there. Whatever he may say, I am confident that he has enough of secret pride and self-esteem to make a large society in Yarndale a matter to him of great indifference. You do not care for such things, sir, and therefore you may not

have heard, or remembered, that he is a very distinguished scholar, and has won prizes at Oxford in competition with the cleverest men there. I admit that he is quite out of his place yonder; I am sorry that he has ever undertaken the duty; but he does not himself seem to regret it: it was his own choice, and though he may be there now, and doing his work with patience and energy, he cannot possibly be expected to remain there very long.'

'Hear me, sir, and let us have done with this chaffering. What his scholarship may be, I neither know nor care: I would not give the toss-up of a bad farthing for all your heathenish Latin and Greek. I consider the trade of our country the glory and power of our country; and I would rather this troublesome hussy should marry a young rising salesman in our warehouse, who was likely to make his way by his own energy and tradesmanlike dealings, than a pale-faced Latin-and-Greek mooncalf, who goes about talking blarney to the women, and whose position is scarcely higher than that of a decent packer. That is my opinion, sir. And you, Mrs. Shorland,—I expect you'll inform your daughter of what I have said. Will children never learn their duties to their parents?'

CHAPTER XV.

‘UNTIL HE FIND IT.’

‘I AM glad to find you both here,’ said Monkhouse to Shorland and Graham, ‘though I do not suppose you will thank a casual visitor for coming into your place of business.’

Monkhouse had called at the counting-house attached to Shorland’s works; and there met his friends.’

‘Why not?’ said Frederick; ‘we’re glad to see you; and I don’t doubt you have some business on hand.’

‘So I have; but I will not keep you long.’

‘We are not busy; indeed, we have just put up some new machinery, and are now going to see how it acts. So, come with us, and give us your opinion: after that, we will confer on your important business.’

They went into the mill, which was now a very large well-constructed building, and adapted on the best principles to the manufacture of calicoes. Monkhouse was struck with the

excellence of its sanitary arrangements,—its cleanliness, its conveniences for washing and dressing, and its careful ventilation. He remarked, too, the very modest and becoming behaviour of the young females. He was recognised by many, who smiled and perhaps said, ‘How are you, sir?’ in an undertone; and who were well pleased to have a word in return; but he could scarcely recognise his friends in their long pinafores, and hair neatly bound up, that it might not cause them inconvenience in their work.

‘Well, Jane,’ said Shorland to a female at some of the new looms, an experienced weaver, and one of the Sunday-school teachers,—‘how are these new looms acting? They seem to be going well.’

‘They are beautiful, sir; they work as smooth as a plane, and will get off a great deal more cloth than the old ones.’

Monkhouse was amused at the apt manner in which Shorland had taken up his business; he seemed now to have forgotten Oxford and lectures, and to have transferred his attention to looms and ledgers, schools and beneficial projects for the poor,—in short, to everything that was philanthropic and fraternal.

‘My object in calling on you,’ said Monkhouse, after they had returned to the counting-

house, ‘was to see if anything could be done in a matter concerning old Jack here; he has called upon me with his tale of grief, and he wants our help.’ Monkhouse then related to them what he knew of Jack’s secret sorrow.

‘We can send for him now, if you think fit,’ said Graham.

‘You had better hear what he has to say yourselves.’

Jack came and told his tale; he was in great trouble, and would be thankful for help. His way, however, of stating his case was not the most lucid, as he got in and out of his narrative after a confusing fashion. To use his own phrase, the yarn which he spun came out somewhat knotted. Still, by a little inquiry, his case became clearer and more intelligible.

‘You are quite sure,’ asked Shorland, ‘that the young person is your niece?’

‘I’m sartain sure: from what she said there conno’ be a doubt.’

‘Now, do you know where she lodges? Have you any idea at all where she is to be found?’

‘No,—but I know her name; and that might be some guide. From her looks too I could ha’ towd (told) her. She favvoured (resembled) my sister uncommon; she might ha’ bin spit out of her mouth; she’s been a

bonny lass, but them bonny wenches often come to mischief here.'

'But if she were found, would she consent to come to any respectable place for a time, till she was prepared for some situation in which she could make her own living?'

'I expect she would, if you gentlemen would persuade her; and I would do my utmost to get her into a proper coorse.'

'Your tale, Jack,' said Shorland, 'is only a dark one yet; but we will think it over and see what we can do; the matter may come out clearer after awhile. What was her name?'

'Isabella Cleary.'

'You can now go to your post; and be prepared in a day or so to go with us, if we want you.'

'Thank yer honour.'

Graham at once set inquiry on foot; and shortly a policeman was found who thought he knew the girl sought after, and where she lived; and he promised, on the next evening, to accompany Monkhouse, Shorland, and Graham, with Jack, to investigate the case.

On the arrival of the party at the house, they found its domestic condition quieter and apparently more decent than they might have expected. The mistress, who did not like the look of the policeman with his retinue,

said that ‘a girl called Bella lodged there, and was lying very ill. She had been carefully attended to, and was getting gradually better. She was a well-behaved girl, in her way, and was a favourite at the house.’

They found the young woman recovering from a slow fever,—one of the typhoid type, which is not infectious, though dangerous. It had brought down her strength of body and mind to the lowest ebb. Her case no doubt had been a wretched one; for, though help had been kindly rendered to her, with something even of attention, her decaying energies could have experienced no enlivenment and alleviation, surrounded as she was by scenes of sorrow.

‘Well, Bella,’ said Jack to her, ‘how are you? Badly, I’m afraid. You remember that you spoke to me in the street not long sin’, and said you were my niece.’

‘O, yes, I remember,’ said the girl in a half-dreaming way, as though her intellect was only just returning to her—‘you are my uncle Jack, I see.’

‘Come now, lass,’ said Jack; ‘come away with us; your mother wants you.’

‘My mother wants me? Where is my mother? I haven’t seen her for years. But would she own me? Have I not been away

from her so long, leading a life that would make her heart bleed? Why, she used to make me say my prayers every night before I went to bed, and now I've forgotten them. But stop—let me see—my mother is dead; I saw her in her coffin; I was present when she was buried. My mother cannot be wanting me, uncle Jack.'

'Yes, yes, she wants you now, though you will not meet her here: she wants you, that you may lead a good and honest life, and be comfortable and happy, and escape from the life of sin and sorrow which you are now living. But come, lass, thou maun go with us, and we'll see after thee. Thou's been at death's door; and if thou art to get better, thou maun skift from (leave) here.'

'Who are those gentlemen with you, uncle Jack?'

'Mr. Monkhouse, the minister at Mudlington, and Mr. Shorland, and Mr. Graham, who own the mills there now.'

'I've heard of them; I've heard good accounts of them. They are improving that district, and it wanted it. It was about there where I was first led away from an honest and a respectable life; I was then working at a dressmaker's shop in Yarndale; the hours were long and the money was light; and if I

did wrong—as I did,—may I be forgiven ! Young girls are very helpless, and often very sorely tried.’

‘Well, well,’ said Jack, ‘don’t talk in that way, lass, just now ; we’ll hear thee when thou gets a bit better. Thou maun get up, and go wi’ us. There’s a place ready for thee to go to.’

‘But what will these gentlemen say ? Will they help me, and bide me near them ?’

‘Aye ; just try them ; thou conno’ think of stopping here to dee like a dog or a ratten in its hole.’

‘Well, I have sometimes wished to be away, but I never could wrestle with the hold that was on me. And since I’ve been lying here, thoughts have come into my mind which aforetime have been driven away by a laugh, and I have pondered on what was to become of me. In my sleep, too, I have had some strange dreams, so distinct as to be remembered clearly afterwards,—sometimes distressing, and sometimes pleasant. At one time, I thought I was undergoing dreadful punishment from whips, while young giddy girls were shrieking round me like fiends : at another, I have fancied myself a child again, and old days came back to me. I have been gathering cowslips and primroses and hyacinths at Howgill glen, and

playing with my fellows. Must I go with you, uncle Jack ?’

In a short time what she possessed in the house was got together, and deposited in her box, the inmates acting with much civility; she was herself wrapped up in warm clothing; a coach was procured; and she was sent at once to the Home of Refuge. The Institution was not for the promiscuous admission of penitents; it was rather of a select and private character, and it was under a most respectable matron. Monkhouse had all along interested himself in its management and support, and had considerable influence in its arrangements,—seeing at once that if good was to spring out of such institutions, it must be rather in individual cases judiciously chosen than in flocks from a midnight meeting.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE WHEEL OF FORTUNE.

‘WELL, and how have you two young ladies been employing your valuable time this afternoon?’ asked Graham of his wife and Ellen; ‘have you been out for a walk in the fresh air, or trying your prentice hands at gardening, or have you been reading, or sleeping, or what?’

‘Ellen,’ Margaret replied, ‘is rather afraid to venture out, for the wind is still keen, though the sun is shining,—it is partly from the east, and so long as it blows from that quarter, it aggravates her cough; but when it changes, as it soon will now, she will be able to take her a walk and enjoy herself in the warm air out of doors.’

‘I fancy you are too sanguine, Margaret,’ said Ellen, shaking her head, and smiling languidly; ‘I should like, I admit, once again to enjoy the beautiful sights of spring and summer—for I see them with my mind’s eye—the many-coloured flowers and trees in full foliage

—and to feel the warm air as it comes to you full of sweet odours from the orchards and the hawthorn hedges, from the banks of primroses and violets and hyacinths, where we have rambled in former years; but that is scarcely likely: my strength is almost gone, and my days, I think, will be few.’

‘You must not say so, Ellen,’ rejoined Graham, in a lively tone; ‘Whitsuntide is now not far off, and all our young folks, as usual, are talking about it; they are thinking about nothing else than their games and romps, their country rambles and railway trips; and it would not be the same to them if you never appeared among them, Ellen.’

‘I should delight to hear their merry voices and pleasant songs again,’ she replied; ‘and I should be so much amused to see them surround Mr. Monkhouse in a ring,—he would look so surprised. But however it may be, I am quite resigned to the will of Him who has been my Guardian from infancy to the present time. He knows what is best for us, and He will fulfil his promise to those who look up to Him.’

Mr. and Mrs. Graham were now settled in the suburbs of Yarndale. Their house was not large, but it had a very neat appearance outside, with its trim garden and small grass-plot:

inside it was furnished with considerable elegance and taste, Graham having for some years been a collector of such works of art as came within his means. Ellen was now with them on a visit; and it was but too evident, whatever her friends might say to cheer her spirits, that her days were numbered. Consumption had set in; and, though it was unattended by pain beyond that which is ever inseparable from weakness, it was advancing onward with its secret and stealthy steps. She could still walk out a short distance when the sun was shining and the air warm; but that hectic flush, that harassed breathing, that hollow cough, indicated with sufficient clearness that the lungs were undergoing a gradual decay. Alas! how many in our crowded cities, especially among the young women, fall a prey to this insidious disease! And yet it often appears among them in a gentle form and a beautiful aspect,—not striking its victim with sudden shock or stamping the youthful face with marks of distortion or deformity, but quenching slowly and gradually the natural love of life and infusing a spirit of resignation into the heart, leaving the mind unclouded in bodily decay, beautifying features that are plain and intensifying attractiveness in the beautiful, maintaining a subdued light in the eye and a delicate

colour on the cheek, and relinquishing them to the silent keeping of death, calm and placid as though they were sinking into an untroubled sleep.

‘But I have a question or two to ask of you, Margaret,’ said Graham, as the three were seated at the tea-table.

‘Very well, I will answer your inquiries if I can.’

‘What was your grandmother’s maiden name, do you remember?’

‘Really I can hardly say, though I think I should recollect it if I heard it. She would never speak much about her early life, and grandfather seemed rather to avoid talking about those times. Occasionally she would throw out a hint that she was the daughter of a landed proprietor in Scotland; but if I began to make inquiries, she always stopped at once, and refused to answer any questions.’

‘Was it Raeburn, think you?’

‘I think it was; I cannot be quite positive; but I fancy that was the name.’

‘Do you know what county in Scotland she came from?’

‘No: if I have ever heard, I have forgotten it.’

‘Did you ever learn how she became acquainted with your grandfather?’

‘No ; I have heard her, though, throw out some hints casually that their match was a runaway one, and disagreeable to her family, as grandfather was not her equal in station ; I think I have heard her insinuate that all acquaintance with her family ceased on her marriage, and that she wanted to know no more about them. And now, let me be the cross-examiner. Why do you ask these questions?’

‘I will tell you why. I have seen to-day an advertisement in the *Times* which I certainly think may have some reference to your grandmother. It is here, and I will read it to you. “Information wanted.—Margaret Raeburn, of Raeburn, Stirling. About the year 1800 she married Patrick Maxwell, who is known to have served in a cavalry regiment throughout the Peninsular war. If any one can give information of the said Margaret Raeburn, should she be living, or of her descendants, if she have left any, he is particularly requested to communicate with Walter Skinner, W. S., Edinburgh.”’

‘That certainly looks as if it were an inquiry after grandmother. Grandfather’s name is Patrick ; and we know well enough that he served through the Peninsular campaigns. But, if it be as we think, can you be sure that they are making inquiry for grandmother’s advan-

tage? May there not be some mischief and unpleasantness involved in it?’

‘I do not know, but I should think not. At any rate, they cannot make you answerable for your grandam’s runaway match; and, supposing she stole away on a palfrey, they cannot come on us for it, I expect. But after tea I will go over and see her about it. Perhaps I may be able to get some further insight into the mystery.’

‘Yes, you had better make inquiry from grandmother herself; but you must be careful how you go about it. Let her have a good deal of her own way; for if you begin to press her at all, she will begin to croon, as she calls it, over some fancy or other, and not answer you a word. I sometimes wonder what she is thinking about as she takes those moody fits. Ellen here would be more likely to coax her history out of her than any of us.’

‘I would rather not make the trial,’ rejoined Ellen, laughing; ‘Mrs. Maxwell is fonder of looking into the future, as she talks with me, than of recalling her own early life. So far as I am concerned, though, the old lady’s prophetic vision has not been far astray.’

After tea Graham walked over to see the Maxwells; he pondered on his way how he could most cleverly circumvent the old lady;

but he had not fixed on any definite line of diplomacy when he found himself in the presence of the venerable couple.

‘So you have not been over to see us yet,’ he said to them, as though he had no particular object in view,—‘we shall begin to think that you do not mean to visit us,—that you intend to cast off our acquaintance.’

‘Aye, aye,’ replied the old soldier,—‘it is easy enough for you to talk in that way: I once could have moved about as actively as yourself; but if you had to stir with my rheumatism, perhaps you might not find it so easy a matter to leave home, after all.’

‘Well, but we will send an easy coach for both of you some fine morning, and you shall spend the day with us. You will promise to come, grandmother?’

‘Old folks are best at home, ar’n’t they?’

‘But they must not be rooted at home like so many trees, so as never to stir away from it, must they? Besides, Margaret wants to show you a great many things.’

‘How’s Margaret?’ inquired the Sergeant.

‘How’s Ellen?’ asked the old dame.

‘Margaret is very well, but Ellen is only poorly: I fear her time here is not to be long.’

‘Of course—of course,—have I not always told her so? I knew it would be so, poor girl;

but she'll be taken away in mercy—taken away in mercy. How could she get on in a rough world like this, delicate and blind and helpless and of tender feelings as she is? She will be removed in mercy. I have dreamt about Ellen several times, and I have seen her laid out in her white dress, pale as a lily; and it will prove true.'

'Do you believe in dreams, grandmother?'

'And why should I not? Things hidden from our waking thoughts are often brought before us in visions of the night. Have we not Scripture warrant for thinking so?'

'So you speak from your own experience of such sleeping visions?'

'Of course I do; such presentiments may not be vouchsafed to all, but they are to some as sure as that your reason is at ordinary work when you are waking. It may not be always possible to interpret them beforehand; but, after awhile, the truth comes out, and often in a way you could not have foreseen.'

'You don't, then, give up the early notions you imbibed in Scotland?'

'It is very strange,' she continued in an undertone, 'that I should have dreamt so much about Scotland lately. I have never thought about it particularly for many a long day; and yet for two or three nights I have dreamt that

I was in the old house where I was born, and playing in the gardens and rambling by the burn, as I did when I was a child. It is very odd: it puzzles me a good deal; but something will come of it.'

'I hear what you are saying, grandmother, and your words remind me that most likely I shall soon have to go to Scotland on business. I should like to visit your native place, just out of curiosity. Was it not Raeburn in Stirling? Have I not heard you remark that your maiden name was Raeburn, and that you were of Raeburn in Stirling?'

'When did you ever hear me remark so,—eh, boy?'

'Yes,' interposed the Sergeant, 'but you know, dame, that your maiden name was Margaret Raeburn, and that you were Raeburn of that ilk in Stirling, and that you were as handsome a young lass as ever trode those hill-sides.'

There were still some lingering relics of vanity in the old lady's mind, and she did not altogether repudiate the portrait; she merely observed, 'Well, well—past and gone—not worth thinking on in an old body with one foot in the grave.'

'But,' said Graham hesitatingly, 'I have something here to show you, grandmother, and I want to ask your advice about it.'

‘What is it, then? My advice will not be worth much, I reckon.’

Here Graham read to the old couple the advertisement he had extracted from the newspaper.

‘Aye, there it is,’ rejoined Mrs. Maxwell in her moody undertone,—‘there it is—it is that matter which has been haunting me in my dreams. I thought there was something coming. I know not whether it will turn out well or ill,—we are in God’s hands.’

‘But you would recommend me to make further inquiry into the business?’

‘I cannot say—I cannot say, indeed,—I guess it will be a matter of fifty pounds due to us under someone’s will, and that Mr. Skinner will get the money, all but about twenty shillings. Still—let me see—let me see—I have had warning about it in dreams, and I think we should follow God’s providence. He gives us a thread to hold, and we must go where it leads. Yes, I think we should follow out the clue as we have been bidden to do, whether the business be for good or ill. For us two old folks it is of no moment whether you inquire or not; but for the sake of all of you, it might be a satisfaction to know why this lawyer wants us. And more than

all, it is God's will that we should answer these inquiries.'

'Will you oblige me with some particulars about your early life, grandmother, that I may be able, if necessary, to give Mr. Skinner all the information he requires?'

'Particulars! my memory is clear enough about those times, long since as they may be; it is strange that I should not recollect half as well what passed last year. But I cannot bring myself to make a tale out of my early life, though old scenes and adventures often cross my mind yet. Sergeant Maxwell there knows as well as I do all you need be told. So ask him.' Here she turned round, put her elbows on her knees, and fell into one of her meditative moods, occasionally ejaculating in a low tone,—'Very strange—to want information about us after so many years are passed and gone,—I cannot make it out.'

'The outline of our history—enough for the purpose, at any rate,' the soldier began,—'may be stated very shortly. We are both Scotch born—I in Dumfries, and she in Stirling. Now, it so happened that when we were about one-and-twenty, we met at one of those gatherings for rustic amusement which were held at that time in Stirling. I was on a visit to a relative in the neighbourhood. Well, as

good or ill luck would have it, while the games were going on, Margaret Raeburn's pony fell and rolled down a precipice,—when I, being close at hand, caught her in my arms, so that she did not fall with it. The bank was not so very deep certainly, and the pony was not very much injured; but if she had got entangled with it and fallen underneath it, she would probably have lost her life. Now, somehow or other, from that time an intimacy sprang up between us, for which it is not so easy to account. It is true enough we were both very good-looking—I may say it, who shouldn't; but you may be sure no great vanity in the matter of good looks lingers with me. You may not perceive any remains of them now in me, for scars and old age have well-nigh effaced them: so far as the old dame is concerned, you may yet discover, notwithstanding what she has passed through, that her features were of a handsome and striking cast. Well, we became very much attached to each other without well knowing how it came about; and perhaps this feeling was increased from the difficulties we had to encounter in our meetings. Human nature is very perverse, sir; and we sometimes set our hearts on an object with more determination, because it can only be got at in secrecy and against the wish of

others. For you must understand that while Margaret Raeburn was a lady and a belle, much followed by the young country lairds, I was not a gentleman in their sense of the word. You must know the Scotch are very proud of their pedigrees and families and clans and such-like things; and I was not of the same rank and position as she was. I was of the Maxwell clan certainly, but only the son of a small farmer in Dumfries. I had received a good education, it is true, and had fair manners: still, I was a long way from being considered a fit husband for Margaret Raeburn. The very thought of such a thing would have driven her family into a frenzy. Her father and mother were living, and she had three brothers, one younger and two older than herself. Well, to make a long tale short, we ran away together and got married; and the marriage lines are now in my desk. It was a rash step, I fear, but if it were excusable at all, it was on the ground of our youth and the sincere attachment that was between us.'

'It was God's will,' interrupted the old lady, who all along had shown symptoms that she was listening to the narrative,—'you would not run in the face of Providence, would you, Sergeant Maxwell?'

'That is clearing up a question in an off-

hand way, dame. But however it may have been, this must be said,—that there never passed between us any after recriminations and reproaches on the matter: we girded up ourselves to our lot; we encountered our trials manfully; and though my wife had to bear much to which she had not been accustomed, I must say this,—I never heard from her a syllable of complaint. Well, what was to be done after getting married?—that was the question; how were we to live? We went to Glasgow, where I followed the trade of a mechanic to which I had served my apprenticeship; we lodged with an old servant of the Raeburn family, and we just managed to pay our way decently. Of course Margaret was cut off from her relations: indeed, they sent to her some most insulting and unjustifiable messages, which she never forgave’—

‘Stop there now—I have forgiven them—I have wiped them out of mind, as a Christian woman.’

‘Well, you may have done so now, dame; but you know when, some years after, your family would have made some approaches to us, and offered us some help, you spurned their aid with indignation. You see, sir, she was always a woman of very strong will—of singular determination beyond that of women

generally,—though I must say this, that as far as I was concerned she never sought more than her own proper share of power between us; she was a woman that would bear and endure anything—’

‘What’s that to your tale, Sergeant Maxwell? Go on with your tale.’

‘It is no use for me to make a long tale of it, or to go into particulars. We just managed to make a living for some years. We had two children within the first six years of our married life, who both died. One was a most beautiful girl, but blind, though you could not have perceived it. Maybe you have remarked how fond the old lady is of blind Ellen. In my opinion, it is from nothing but associating her with the recollection of that child.’

‘Ellen is wonderfully like what little Maria was,—that’s true,’ said the old woman in a subdued tone.

‘As I said, we paid our way and kept out of debt on our earnings; but that kind of life did not jump altogether with the dame’s fancy. So, when the country was talking about nothing but wars and military glory, I enlisted with her consent, if not at her request. You are aware that I was in all the principal engagements throughout the Peninsular war, and that I carry the Waterloo medal on my breast.

I did my duty as a soldier, sir, as my officers would testify, and on more than one occasion I came under the notice of Lord Wellington himself. And here let me say a word for the old lady—'

'Old lady! no older than you, Sergeant Maxwell.'

'She was the best soldier's wife that ever was known: while she never allowed the boldest to approach her but with respect, she was everywhere ready and anxious to give help where it was needed. In the hospitals and on the battle-fields, there she was; and no doubt she relieved much pain and saved many a poor fellow's life. She was known to the officers,—perhaps it was understood that she was of a good family,—and in all the campaigns she was allowed greater privileges than belong to a sergeant's wife; and she repaid them by giving herself up to the service of her king and country. Wasn't that so, dame?'

'Well, go on with your tale.'

'On getting my discharge and pension I settled in Yarndale; I took up with my old handicraft, and James was apprenticed to the trade of a mechanic, and we lived very comfortably. We have been very prosperous in our humble way ever since. James grew up steady—a great blessing in these towns, sir—

and he married a sensible, excellent wife ; and now their daughter has made a capital match, we think, with you ; and she deserves it ; for never was there a better girl. We have never been very well-to-do, it is certain ; but we have not wanted for anything,—indeed, we have been able to go on saving a little,—and perhaps we have been as happy on the whole as if we had been possessed of considerable property. Happiness, sir, depends much less than people seem to think on money : comfort springs from within us ; and if families can only earn their bread and pay their way respectably, they are as likely to be happy on little as much. That is just an outline of our history : it would take a long time to fill it up ; but very likely I have told you all that is necessary for your purpose.’

‘I think,’ replied Graham, ‘that the information you have given me will be as much as I require. If I want any more, I will apply to you again.’

‘But,’ continued the old soldier, ‘there is one matter I must tell you of, as it seems to me to bear on that advertisement. You see it is stated that I was known to have served through the Peninsular campaigns. The circumstance I was thinking of was this. At the battle of Vittoria there was some hard cavalry fighting ; regiments got mixed ; and there was

plenty of brisk hand-to-hand encounters. Late on in the fight I came up to one of our officers who was in a very critical position. He was weak, and suffering, I fancy, from wounds and loss of blood; but, be that as it may, there were two of the enemy coming down on him; another moment, and he would have been stretched dead enough, when I rode up to his rescue. I cut down one, who was a lancer, and then fell on the other. He turned out a first-rate swordsman, very strong in the wrist and very skilful in fence, and he gave me a deal of trouble; but at last I proved the better man with my weapon, and he fell. Now—it seems almost like a romance, but it is true—the officer I rescued was no other, as it came out, than Major Raeburn, the dame's second brother. He found out who it was that had saved his life; and he sought an interview with the old lady there; but she would not have anything to say to him. I think, dame, you have been a little too stubborn and unrelenting now and then in your way through life; I think you should sometimes have yielded, when you set yourself as firm as a rock.'

'Maybe so,' she answered, straightening herself in her chair; 'possibly you are not far wrong. But I was born with a strong will, and I grew up with it; and you musn't expect

that a woman with my natural resolution could be turned like a frightened child or a hysterical school-girl. We must not be all measured by the same rule: what is easy to one is hard to another. Still, I am willing to allow, I might have striven more than I did sometimes against this besetting sin—this resolution of temper.'

'Now, Mr. Graham, I will give you my opinion of this advertisement. I think it very likely that Major Raeburn, remembering that he owed his life to me, and believing that we should not receive anything from him while he was living, may have left behind him for us some trifling sum of money, or other memento, as a token of his gratitude. What think you, dame?'

'Maybe it is so.'

'How long is it since you ever heard anything of the Raeburns?' inquired Graham.

'Never since we settled in Yarndale, forty years since.'

'Who knows what changes may have passed over the family since then? But I will wish you good-night; and, you may be sure, I will let you know what has been the result of my investigation, so soon as I have communicated with Mr. Skinner.'

Before leaving the Maxwells, Graham had

fixed with the old couple a day in the following week for the long-talked-of visit, and at the appointed time there was at their door a roomy coach, easy to ascend into, easy to descend from, and easy in its motion. An eventful morning surely was that to the ancient pair! They very rarely passed the threshold of their own door, and therefore it required in them a most determined effort to arouse themselves to the task of leaving home and spending the day elsewhere. Sergeant Maxwell, however, undertook it as a duty, and felt himself to be in some sense under a word of command; and his dame stirred herself up to the undertaking, and exhibited something of her ancient will as she faced the trial. Then, what a work of patience and perplexity confronted Mrs. Maxwell, as she engaged to array her parents in their most becoming dresses! But the task was at length completed. The Sergeant appeared in his blue frock-coat buttoned up to the chin, with its gilt buttons, his stiff black stock, his grey trousers, and Wellington boots, while all his orders and medals were suspended on his breast by gay ribbons of different colours. The old lady came forth in a mob cap white as snow, a black silk dress, heavy and rich, and an expensive shawl of antique pattern,—her whole costume becoming her well, but not

bearing the mark of modern fashion. Her gown had been laid up many years unused, and had to undergo the process of airing, straightening and arranging before the eventful day arrived. So far Mrs. Maxwell had done her work satisfactorily; then, to complete her achievement, she brushed the soldier's hat, and tied on the old lady's bonnet, and helped them singly into the coach, promising that she would herself come over in the afternoon to tea, together with her husband.

Margaret was ready at her door to receive the old couple on their arrival: she helped them out of the vehicle, and conducted them into her house with a genuine heartiness of welcome. She had a grateful affection for them; as for her grandmother's foibles, she had long learned to put up with them.

'How glad I am to see you both!' she exclaimed; 'I expect you'll be able to pay us such a visit often. Why, grandmother, you look like old times; and as for grandfather, if it was not for his crutch there, I should almost think him sprightly enough to lead a cavalry charge again.'

'Thou'rt a silly wench, Maggie, to talk so,' said the old lady in her pleasantest tone and mood; 'still, we're both pleased to come and see you in your own house, before we pass

away : old folks ramble back to their early days again as they look upon their grandchildren.'

'Maggie was always a good girl and a comfort to us, dame.'

'And how's Ellen?' asked dame Maxwell, taking the blind girl by the hand; 'how's Ellen? A little better this nice warm weather, I expect.'

'Yes, grandmother, I have got out a little in the fresh air, and I breathe more freely; I am glad the east winds are gone.'

Here Bess came up, first to the old lady for her salutation, and next proceeded to the Sergeant for his greeting, eyeing them thoughtfully and snuffing at them curiously, as though there was something new in the style of their dresses and in the fact of their being away from home; and then she returned to the side of her mistress.

'Bess is not in good spirits, granny,' Margaret observed; 'she seems to be pining because Ellen is not well; she looks up at her as though she marked every change in her countenance and appearance.'

And now Margaret had to show her grandparents all her treasures, and to tell them how kind every one had been to her. The Rev. Mr. Monkhouse had called upon her, and Mr. Frederick Shorland had made her a very useful

present of silver forks and spoons. Mrs. and Miss Shorland, too, had paid her a visit, and begged her acceptance of a handsome china tea-service. She mentioned many other genteel people also who had called upon her, and shown her civility and attention.

‘You’ve a very nice house, furnished in first-rate style, Maggie,’ said her grandfather, ‘and you deserve it all : Mr. Graham, too, will make as good a husband as you will a wife. We began life, dame, not quite so smoothly ; but our grandchildren are better deserving of an easy march along the road perhaps than we were.’

‘Providence fits us to our places and our places to us, Sergeant : that wind and rain that does not harm the woolly ewe, would a’most kill the tender lamb.’

Margaret had provided for dinner what she knew the old people could relish, and they enjoyed the creature comforts that were set before them ; Ellen even, and Bess, seemed to eat with a little zest. After dinner, while the ladies were at their dessert, the old soldier was indulged with a glass of whisky-and-water and a pipe. His daily whiff of tobacco after dinner and after supper was a source of great comfort to him. ‘You see,’ he would say, ‘they cry out against tobacco, as if to smoke a pipe was

an unpardonable sin; and certainly smoking may be abused; but if those who make such a fuss against tobacco had seen how a pipe cheered us after a day's wear and tear—a march maybe in rough weather or a brisk turn-up with the enemy—they would not cry out against it as they do.'

'How soon do you expect your good man home, Maggie?' inquired the old dame.

Graham had immediately communicated with Mr. Skinner on the subject of the advertisement; and the lawyer, without entering into the matter, had requested him at once to come up to Edinburgh, inasmuch as a personal interview would be more satisfactory and afford the opportunity for a fuller explanation than a correspondence. Graham, accordingly, went up at once, and he was now on his way home again.

'He will be back before tea, granny; he will be here before five o'clock, as he tells me in his letter.'

'You seem to be a little fidgety, dame,' her husband remarked; 'I can tell when you are uneasy in your mind. I know you have been turning this puzzling matter over in your thoughts for several days back, and that you will be restless till it is cleared up. It is rather singular in you, dame; you often seem to care

very little for what is passing in the world, and rather to jest at all anxious people.'

'Well, it may be that I am a little disturbed about this business. I cannot tell how it is; but somehow it has got hold of my mind more than I could have expected. Scotland had long passed away from my thoughts; at least, it was no more to me than any other place; my early years were a'most forgotten; but now they have come back upon me time after time, in my dreams and in my waking moments, till I am surprised at myself. And maybe it is not so strange after all that old folks with one foot in the grave should think of their youth and those who were brought up hand in hand with them. My father and mother—I heard of their death; but forty years have passed since any account of my brothers has come to me. A wide gulf lay between us, and we strove possibly to wipe out the memory of each other; but somehow I have been driven lately to think about the family, and to wonder what has become of them—whether they have prospered or fallen back in the world. There is a Providence in it all, I am sure—a Providence, it may be, declaring that it is time for old people like us to pluck the stings out of our memory and to strive after what the Prayer Book calls "that most excellent

gift of charity, the very bond of peace and of all virtues.”’

The day was warm, and they agreed to have tea in a summer-house that was in the garden; and, just as all the preparation for it had been made, Graham returned. He saluted his visitors warmly; but, though the old lady’s suspense was evidently on the increase, he did not at once satisfy her anxiety.

‘So I have seen Edinburgh,’ he began, after they had sat down to tea, ‘and a very magnificent city it is.’

‘And Mr. Skinner?’ inquired the old lady.

‘Yes, I’ve seen Mr. Skinner, and he is a very obliging, business-like man; he asked after you both.’

‘Does he know us, then?’

‘Not personally; but he knew your family, and he had heard some little about yourselves, —though very little. Indeed, as you had forgot your relatives, they seem to have paid you the same compliment by forgetting you.’

‘Like enough: we never expected that they would keep us in mind, nor did we desire it.’

‘But, grandmother, I have been at Raeburn as well as Edinburgh.’

‘Have you, for sure?’

‘Yes, and I’ve gone through the house where you were born, and the grounds where you ran about as a child.’

‘Very well,’ replied the old lady, endeavouring to suppress by a determined effort of the will her manifest impatience,—‘very well, and who lives there now?’

‘Why, nobody resides there just now. But I will tell you all I know about the place and your family; for you have still enough of old Scotch clanship in you to feel an interest in such a tale.’

‘Go on, then,’ said she, evidently struggling with her emotions, and holding down her head, lest she might seem more interested in the narrative than was consistent with her character.

‘Your father and mother, as you know, died about five-and-forty years ago, leaving behind them yourself and three sons. One, you are aware, served in the Peninsula; he returned to Scotland at the end of the war, and lived six or eight years; but he never fairly recovered from the effect of his fatigues and wounds, and he died unmarried. The brother younger than yourself became an advocate at the Scotch bar, and attained to some eminence. On his death he left two daughters behind him, one of whom was never married, and the other died with her child in her first confinement; so that the only remaining line in your family was that of your eldest brother, the squire, or laird. He

had several children, both sons and daughters, some of whom died young : on his death about nine years ago he left behind two sons and a daughter. Since that time one son has died in India unmarried ; the daughter was cut off more recently, leaving no issue ; and lastly, the son who was the inheritor of the estates has passed away childless. He was of a delicate constitution, and he died abroad some months ago, where he had gone, as he hoped, for the benefit of his health. So that, you see, the whole stock has been swept away, with the exception of yourself and your descendants.'

'And what then? We must all pass away in our turn,' said the old lady.

'What then? It seems that by the law of entail the property comes to you and to your family. You have now my tale in full so far as the object of my journey is concerned.'

The announcement necessarily took the whole company by surprise ; they scarcely comprehended the tidings,—certainly not in their full meaning and extent. Ellen dropped her cup ; Margaret's hand became so unsteady that she was obliged to set down the tea-pot ; the Sergeant opened his eyes wide, but did not speak ; and the old lady drew herself up, tried to look calm, and merely ejaculated, 'It's God's will.'

‘Were the oaks standing at the entrance of the drive up to the house?’ she inquired, breaking the general silence, as her mind seemed to be wardering back over a long series of years; ‘oaks don’t die like men.’

‘Yes, they stand there yet, like giant trees, their branches stretching over a very wide circle; they have stood many a storm, and seemingly will stand many more.’

‘Does the burn still wimple through the pleasure-grounds and garden?’

‘Yes; burns are almost more lasting than oaks: only, the garden and pleasure-grounds have been much altered since you knew them: every thing has been brought into modern fashion; the walks and flower-beds and lawns are arranged according to the taste of the present day.’

‘Is the summer-house there?’

‘There is a summer-house in the garden, but it is not the one you knew; it must have been built within the last twenty years. The house, too, is not your old home exactly; it has been enlarged and modernised, and made a much more commodious mansion than it was in your young days, though it may not be so attractive in your eyes. It certainly looks remarkably well now, on the slope of the hill that extends far away backwards covered with

plantations to the top. · But you must go over and see the place for yourself, grandmother; and grandfather must go with you. Perhaps, if matters turn out as we expect, you may take up your residence there.'

'No, no—I will ne'er again cross the borders of Scotland: at my age, I will bide where I am. You young people may take your pleasure in the place, but my home for the short time that remains to me must be hereabouts: so, too, for the Sergeant.'

'Well, it is time enough to talk about that. The rental of the property, I may add, has increased considerably during the last fifty years; agricultural improvements have been carried on to a great extent there; the best styles of farming have been introduced; fresh lands have been brought into cultivation; and still more may be. The property, Mr. Skinner informs me, is not, nor indeed could it be, encumbered, and the rental is now about £2,500 a year. I fancy there will be little or no difficulty in proving your claim to it, grandmother; so, you see, you will be a great lady in your old age, and we shall have to touch our hats to you when we meet you in your carriage.'

'Some folks, lad, are prouder in adversity

than in prosperity,' she remarked, 'and I am one of them.'

'Why, James,' said the Sergeant to his son, who had come with his wife to tea, and who had been listening in perplexity and bewilderment to the statement,—'why, James, if this comes out as Mr. Graham says it will, you will have to turn gentleman all at once, without serving an apprenticeship to the trade.'

'I don't know about that,' replied the son; 'but I've six months' work before me by engagement with my master; I've Jackson's engine to finish, and I've Stevens's machinery to get ready, and other jobs in hand; and I'd go through with 'em according to bargain, whether I was as poor as Jacob or as rich as Methuselah, choose how.'

'Jacob! Methuselah! James,' interposed the old woman; 'thou may be a good hand with the hammer, but thou'rt a bad hand at Scripture, lad.'

'Well, as rich as a Jew, or a Duke, or a Prince. I am so bothered, I was confounding Jacob and Methuselah with,—I forget who they were.'

'That's right, James,' said the veteran, approvingly, 'never break a bargain—always keep to your word; it was Lord Wellington's maxim, that a man should abide by his

engagement, whatever came of it. I have tried to teach you that rule, and I think you have never broken it.'

In due time the Maxwells returned home. The minds of all the party were necessarily much agitated by what they had heard. Still, none of them, perhaps not even Graham, had been brought to a real comprehension of the news. It takes some time before we can come to a practical understanding of any sudden tidings that act upon us, whether for joy or sorrow. It requires leisure to contemplate them, so as to mark the extent and define the measure of their influence upon us. The first impression is but a bewildering sensation,—a vague notion that something has happened to us either for good or evil: there must be time and reflection to reduce it to a definite figure and mould.

CHAPTER XVII.

A WHITSUN TRIP BY RAIL.

It is a long and weary lane that is without any turning; it is a sorrowful heart that is without any snatch of rejoicing; it is a hardly-used body that is without any recreation. Throughout our manufacturing districts one week out of fifty-two breaks the dull monotony of toil. On Whitweek many bright hopes are centred; to it many pleasant recollections revert. The prospect of it cheers many a weary hour at the loom; the memory of it calls up many a laugh by the evening fire-side. At that time there are Sunday-school processions, Sunday-school games in the fields, Sunday-school railway trips, Sunday-school flirtings, love-makings, and matrimonial engagements. The lads and lasses are wild for the week. It is the Roman Saturnalia returned; when scholars pull about their teachers, teachers their superintendents, and scholars, teachers, and superintendents would hardly hesitate more to roll their clergyman down the hill-side, if they

could catch him, than they would an empty beer-barrel.

If a sound sleeper were to wake up from a slumber of thirty years, he would rub his eyes and be lost in wonderment at the marvellous change which has come over the face of society during that time from the facility of travelling alone. People to whom a journey of twenty miles was a life incident, have now been up to London, and seen its wonders ; people who had never looked upon scenery much beyond their native town or village or homestead, have now travelled over hill and dale, by mountain and lake, in the most romantic parts of our country ; people who had never set their eyes on a sheet of water larger than a duck-pond or a reservoir, have now watched the sea billows dashing on the shore, and inhaled the sea breezes. Cheap excursions by rail abound during the summer months, and Whitweek especially is prolific in them throughout the manufacturing districts. Trains seem to be running in all directions and at startlingly short intervals ; railway whistles greet your ears from all sides ; crowds are flocking to the stations from every point of the compass ; and bustling towns on certain days appear to be emptied of their populations, and left to take care of themselves.

The Tuesday in Whitweek was a day much to be looked forward to and much to be remembered among days. Though the start for Dolphinpool, a well-known watering-place on the western coast, was at a very early hour, and though two thousand—scholars, teachers, parents, friends—were of the Mudlington school party, not one was too late for the train. The professional, called in the manufacturing districts a ‘knocker-up—one, that is, who is engaged in the mornings to tap at windows with a long rod to awake the operatives for their work—had done a large amount of business by sunrise, and picked up many halfpennies. That ancient man, whose occupation lay among odds and ends, returned to his breakfast satisfied with his earnings; while hundreds of young people were arraying themselves in their ‘second-bests,’ with a full purpose of braving wind and weather, and enjoying themselves whatever might betide.

When Monkhouse and Frederick Shorland arrived at the station, a scene of unusual animation presented itself to them. Processions were marching up to that central point from every direction; but at this time their own party were within the inclosure alone, waiting to be packed up and dispatched. What a surging of heads and bodies! What shouting

and laughing ! What rough jesting and practical joking ! What pushing and crushing ! ‘ Dunno ’ thee be thrutching i’ thatness,’ shouts one lad angrily to another who is pressing from behind. ‘ What hort does a bit o’ thrutching do thee, lad ? ’ is the reply ; ‘ will ta fly i’ bits like an Eccles cake, softie ? ’ Then, a girl who has received damage in her bonnet makes a rush at a lad who is laughing at her misfortune : Sarah Jane won’t stand it. Boys and girls are kept separate as far as possible ; but teachers and superintendents have a difficult work on hand. Fathers are there in abundance who have given up all notion of parental control for the day ; mothers, too, with babies in their arms, sorely bewildered in the crowd. Here we catch a sight of the portly form of Mr. Bompas, who is issuing injunctions in a deep bass ; there is Mr. Jenkins, full of magisterial authority, as becomes a man of position, and giving directions according to his own view of the matter ; and there is Mr. Jabez Corby, countermanding the orders of everyone else and enforcing his own peculiar strategic notions. Of this large assembly nearly all have their provisions for the day with them : that boy, you observe, has something circular wrapped up in his red-cotton handkerchief ; from size and figure it might be a tambourine ;

it is a thick-crustcd pie in a large saucer : that stout boy near him is carrying a basket of provend for himself and his sisters ; look inside and you will discover a raised pie of substantial architecture, a loaf of bread, technically called ‘tommy,’¹ and a lump of cheese, with some tea for the girls. Then the older groups have their tea and luxuries of all kinds safely packed up in reticules and small baskets,—that packing has been a work of care and consideration. All the while railway porters and officials in general are rushing about frantically ; and whenever one happens to be peculiarly surly, he receives sundry compliments and interrogatories from witty lads who are at a safe distance. ‘Ar’t on short time this week, owd fellow?’ asks one : another says that he looks ugly, and he ‘will send old Maester Blowers the Scriptur’ reader to convart him ;’ another promises to ‘let him have a trac’ (tract) to suit his particular case ;’ another inquires ‘if he didna get out o’ bed on the wrong side that morning and get a tongue-walking from his wife for it.’ At length the porters rush along the station, crying out savagely, ‘Keep back,

¹ ‘Panem’ is a word in use among the working lads, with the same meaning as ‘tommy.’ It has no doubt been originally started by some boy from a grammar-school, who sought to adorn his mother tongue by the substitution of a Latin word.

there—keep back—do you want to be killed ? ’
—when a train of enormous length, consisting of every kind of carriage, from first-class to sheep-pens, rolls up to the platform. Then follows an indescribable rush for seats : the school directors have theirs reserved ; the young men and women are in no particular haste ; but the lads do not wait for the opening of doors : into the windows they scramble, neck or nothing, exhibiting like centipedes numerous legs projecting at the same time and flapping about in eccentric orbits ; over the sides of the cattle-vans they roll and tumble, lighting on their heads ; you might expect to find them suffering from concussion of the brain, but their heads seem the least vulnerable part of their bodies, and their brains do not come into consideration, even if such mental furniture can be found in their attics at all,—they rise up directly, and in their pens begin to grunt like pigs and bleat like sheep and low like cows, to the great disgust of the surly porter. After awhile the stowage is complete ; the train begins to move forward a little and then backwards a little, as though to give an opportunity to some one inside for the old joke, that, ‘like the carriage he is in, he has been going backward all his life.’ After a few forward and retrograde movements the engine, with

two or three very heavy grunts, seems to make up its mind to start in earnest, and off Phæton goes in his might, with a train behind him so long that you can hardly see the end of it.

And now the sinuous train drags its slow length along out of the station, Phæton puffing and grunting spasmodically, as if he was in a state of over-exertion, and likely to have a hard day of it. A tremendous cheer passes along the line of carriages as an accompaniment to the motion; and then, as the living freight leaves the smoke behind and emerges into the fresh morning air, the carriages become vocal with every species of melody, from that in which niggers delight to an oratorio chorus,—from that which ranters exult in to the orthodox ecclesiastical chorale. To any one, doubtless, there is something exhilarating in the sensation, as he is dashing along between green fields on a fine morning at the rate of twenty miles an hour; but this feeling must be especially intense in those who from year to year are pent up among bricks and exist in an atmosphere of smoke.

And then, how variously is the human freight occupied as the train dashes on! The lads in the cattle-vans shout at the cows, play and quarrel among themselves, whip the carriage with their canes to make Phæton go faster,

and cheer lustily as they dash into a tunnel in defiance of steam and smoke, and more lustily as they emerge again into the sunlight. Teachers, friends, and senior scholars in second-class carriages, are less under the influence of physical excitement; still they are lively, and engaged in the discussion of passing events after a spirited fashion. And are not passing events plentiful at all times? Are not James Sprout and Betsy Shorrock now beginning to 'keep company'? Have there not been three weddings from their acquaintance already this Whitweek? Are not the projected church and schools advancing towards completion? Are there not debateable points in Mr. Monkhouse's personal manner, as well as in his mode of reading and preaching? In this carriage we find our old friend Esther, who is the leader of a 'set,' and a quiz in her way. She is laughing at the Mudlington band, the members of which are in the next compartment, and amusing the company by saying that John Tumbril the leader has been selected to head them up for his personal attractions,—'For, you see, we are all handsome at Mudlington, and so we must have a good specimen at the head of our band.' Now, John had more music in his soul than beauty in his face and proportions. His legs were in the figure of a parenthesis, and he

squinted unmistakably; so that as he sham-bled on at the head of his troop, squinting round every corner, and 'blowing his face to a point,' he had certainly a comical appearance. Esther said that she once saw him try to stop a little pig in an entry by putting his legs together, when it leaped through the opening and ran away, squeaking and grunting. Then a young man asks Esther whether, as she makes so free with her neighbour's legs, she could improve on John Tumbril's in her own,—when she returns some saucy answer which raises the laugh against her opponent, and 'shuts him up.' In another part of the train is a witty youth who is ready to discuss any question on any 'ism' or 'ology' that may be brought forward, supplying the place of argument with rough unpremeditated jokes, and excusing himself for the bad ones by saying that he cannot restrain such sallies, as he is always brilliant in 'Witweek.' He is a member of a Mutual Improvement Society, and as many of those around him are also 'mutuals,' sundry intellectual fencing-matches—'wit combats,' as Fuller calls them—ensue. In another carriage a teetotaler, on seeing a gin-flask in the basket of his neighbour, dashes at once into an oration in the praise of water and on the satanic influence of alcohol, pointing at the bottle in derision, and telling the owner

that the devil is inside it. 'Then I'll drink him, lad, afore the day's over,' replies his opponent. The teetotaler, who has been accustomed to spout on platforms, and lecture on diseased livers, and introduce well-fed specimens of humanity as reformed characters, has the best of it in volubility of speech and fertility of illustration, while the owner of the bottle determines in a stolid fashion to make up for this homily by gin-and-water. Here there is a party of elderly people with their children—parents sobered down by the realities of life, and leaving romance and rattle to their juniors in the adjoining carriage.

'And how are you, Mrs. Whympers?' inquired Mrs. Sharples of her opposite fellow-passenger; 'it's a long while since we met; I hope times are going well with you, Mrs. Whympers.'

'Just middling, Mrs. Sharples,' replies Mrs. Whympers, who is accustomed to look at the dark side of things,—'only middling, ma'am; trade is dull and heavy, and rents and rates is high, Mrs. Sharples,—it's no easy matter to make ends meet now-a-days.'

'You say true, Mrs. Whympers; we have all our trials to exercise us; there's a cork leg behind every counter, as the saying is. There's a skeleton in every barrel of flour we lay in stock, as I say to Mr. Sharples.'

‘How you talk,’ interposed Mrs. Liptrott, a little bustling woman with a flock of children around her and an infant at her breast; ‘you’re looking cheery enough, both of you, with all your troubles,—you’re poor, but pe-art (pert, lively), like the parson’s pig, I expect.’

‘Then,’ continued Mrs. Whympier gloomily, ‘Jemima’s schooling costs ever so much, and Johnny is out apprentice,—so that the candle, you see, is burning at all ends.’

‘There it is,’ struck in Mr. Jump, in whose heart the last words seemed to have touched a sympathetic cord,—‘there it is; growing lads and lasses becomes expensive, Mrs. Whympier; I know that to my cost. You see, so long as they draw on their mother, like Mrs. Liptrott’s babby there, it does not cost much; but when they come to draw on their fayther it’s a job, Mrs. Whympier,—its a job.’

‘Why, what nonsense you talk!’ exclaimed Mrs. Liptrott, good-humouredly; ‘you’re al’ays a fretting and fuming about grievances, which are nothing but fancies, after all.—Be quiet, Mary Jane, and don’t pull Bobby’s cap off.—I’ve been married twelve years, and I’ve eight children; I mostly present Mr. L. with a fresh one every Whitweek, just to bring it out for an airing, and I shall go on, I expect, a bit

longer, Mr. Jump, if it's all the same to you—ha! ha!'

'Well, Mrs. Liptrott,' replied Mr. Jump, rather pettishly, 'it's a matter in which I've no call to interfere whatsomedever.'

'Why,' continued Mrs. Liptrott, 'lots of childer needn't put a body out of the way—Be good, Johnny, and let Sarah Anne alone—keep your cap straight, Bobby,'—Bobby's mercurial, irrepressible cap *will* get awry—'The only trouble is with the first; after that you must make the older ones look to the younger. That's my way o' doing; and it's what I call mut'al edycation in a practical way.'

'Deary me! deary me! Mrs. Liptrott,' rejoined Mrs. Whympier; 'you are such a woman as I never did see; you are the most unpossiblist body I ever did meet with; you don't seem to mind the rubs and scrubs of life any more than a feather; while some folks meet trouble half-way, you throw it over your shoulder, like a worn-out patten.'

'My advice is this, Mrs. Whympier—whether it be wind or rain, or snow or sunshine, go toring¹ on, choose how.'

And so Phaeton dashed on through deep cuttings, along level plains, upon embankments,

¹ This phrase, so common amongst South Lancashire operatives, is simply, we presume, touring on—moving forward.

through tunnels, over bridges, by the side of towns, through stations, snorting, puffing, grunting, but dragging on his enormous tail with a desperate determination. Labourers in the fields ceased their digging to look at the unusual length of carriages, when the lads in the cattle-vans cheered and waved their handkerchiefs, and the ditchers responded by holding up their spades. There were occasional stoppages at stations for Phæton to drink, and for other mysterious locomotive reasons, when many questions were poked at the porters and were answered after a surly fashion; for Whit-week is the trial week of the year—the peculiar touchstone of temper—to railway officials. ‘What o’clock is it, Johnny?’ asks a pert lad. ‘Go look,’ retorts the man in uniform. ‘How far is it to Dolphinpool, owd chap?’ inquires another. ‘Just so far, and no further, young scapegrace,’ is the answer. ‘I could ha’ towed thee that, bout axing, owd grumpy,’ is the ready retort. Look out—whistle—jerk—bang, away they go again; and at length Phæton has done his morning’s work. The words applied to the imaginary hippogriff may not be inappropriate to the less fabulous Phæton:

The liquid path of ether with its wings
The bird four-footed sweeps; and in its stall
At home will gladly bend its weary knee.

And as Phæton stops, the train pours out its enormous cargo within sight of the mighty ocean, when a tremendous cheer rises from the juveniles, as hearty and as loud as that which burst from the remains of the ten thousand under Xenophon, when they first saw the sea after their many perils.

λευρὸν γὰρ οἶμον αἰθέρος ψαίρει πτεροῖς

τετρασκελῆς οἰωνός · ἄσμενος δὲ τᾶν

σταθμοῖς ἐν οἰκείοις κάμψειεν γόνυ.—*Prom. Vinct.* 402.

CHAPTER XVIII.

DOLPHINPOOL.

THE first view of the sea is an incident to be remembered, and many of this company had never seen it before. No sight impresses us with such a profound sense of wonder and awe. Those pyramids and temples which have resisted time for thousands of years, the castle, the cathedral, the national edifice of yesterday, strike us with their grandeur, and manifest to us the marvellous triumphs of mind over material things. But they proclaim simply the might of man's intellect and will : they excite our wonder at the magnitude of his faculties in conceiving and executing designs of such beautiful and enduring combinations. But as we look upon the ocean, we feel at once that there lies before us the handiwork of the great Architect which has no rival in human achievements. In the landscape, diversified with hill and valley, wood and stream, we are delighted with the wild

charms of nature as chastened by the appliances of art, and we trace with pleasure the manifestation of beauty, arrangement and beneficence, in the works of creation. But it does not stir up within us from their recesses the same emotions of solemnity and awe as the ever-restless deep. What is so suggestive of the divine attributes as the ocean? What figures to us so fully the idea of Omnipotence? The mightiest engines of human device are by its side feeble as the arm of the child. The navy that one while rides in majesty on its playful surface and yet, on occasion, can lay in ruins 'the walls of rock-built cities,' is tossed on its bosom, when upheaved in wrath, lightly as its own spray. What is so illustrative of the mysterious and unknown? It is described as 'the throne of the Invisible.' What wonders are concealed within its depths,—wonders which will never be revealed to the eye of man, life in forms which we cannot picture, inanimate productions beyond our conception, disjointed relics of humanity in every aspect, and unnumbered treasures, the spoils of 'a thousand argosies!' What gives us so complete a notion of eternity? The earth is ever variable: change is everywhere sweeping over its surface: but the ocean, whether in storm or calm—in its 'dimpling'

smiles ¹ stretching far away in the sunshine, or its billows crested with angry foam—is still the same.

Unchangeable save to thy wild waves' play,
Time writes no wrinkle on thine azure brow,—
Such as creation's dawn beheld, thou rollest now.

On leaving the train the multitudes for the most part wended their way to the beach, that they might take a first wondering look at the sea. That Yarndale population, accustomed to mills with tall chimnies and machine shops with blazing forges and ringing anvils, gazed with amazement on a scene so very different from anything which they met in daily life. They did not all of course look with corresponding emotions upon the great deep, as it rolled with its swelling diapason on the dry sands: each regarded it from his own point of view. Here is a knot of lads standing with their baskets in their hands, and watching the waves with a kind of bewilderment, as though there were 'more things in the rolling waters than were dreamt of in their philosophy.'

'My eyes,' one begins, 'what a sight o' wayter, and they say it is ever so much more than we can see!'

¹ ποντίων τε κυμάτων
ἀνήριθμον γέλασμα.—*Prom. Vinc.* 89.

‘Aye, lad,’ another remarks, ‘and I’ve he-ard as it tastes as if buckets of saut had been tumbled into it.’

‘And it’s here,’ a third takes up the recital, ‘as mussels and cockles and flocks and herrings comes fro’.’

‘Is it that,’ inquires a fourth, ‘as makes the herrings taste so saut, I wonder?’

Here is another group with Jack Timbertoes as the Coryphæus. Jack is looking on the broad expanse of waters with a sort of filial affection for an element on which he had spent a considerable portion of his life, and experienced many enjoyments and many perils. He stood in silence for some time, leaning on his stick, while his thoughts were wandering back over many years to scenes of excitement and bloodshed.

‘How would you like to be afloat again, Jack?’ asks one of the group.

‘I would join, and welcome, if them Moun-seers was to try to come, lad.’

‘You’ve a grudge still against them Frenchmen, Jack?’ said another.

‘Grudge! I don’t know about that; but it’s a Christian duty to fight a Frenchman, at say: more particular, if he was a-coming to land on our shores, unaxed.’

‘But you’d be only a muff now, Jack, at walking the deck and mounting the rigging.’

‘Happen, I might: but I could give one of them frog-eating jokers a broadside still: I’ve done so afore to-day, young man.’

‘And what is your opinion of the tides, Jack?’ inquired one who was a pupil-teacher and a student in natural science.

‘The tides! Why, the tides is tides,—that’s my opinion on the tides.’

‘Well, but what causes them, I mean?’

‘What causes ’em! It’s God’s will.’

‘That’s cutting the knot, Jack, instead of unloosing it: philosophers haven’t found out for certain what causes the tides.’

‘Ph’los’phers! prating cockatoos! What do they know about navigation? I’ve seen more o’ th’ tides nor all such chattering pynots (magpies) put together.’

‘You’ve been round the world nearly, Jack,’ continued the student, who was fond of launching problems: ‘is’nt it a strange thing, that if you start from one spot, and go straight on and on, you will come back again to the point from which you started.’

‘Who said so?’ objected Jack, who, like the late Dean Cockburn, always took his stand resolutely on the old prescientific paths,—‘all stuff and nonsense,—tell ’em I said so.’

‘But they won’t believe you, Jack. Why, is not the earth like a ball, and does not the sea flow round its surface?’

‘How can it, young man? Does’nt wayter find its own level? Who ever he-ard of wayter flowing round a ball? How you talk!’

‘Yes, but there are such things as attraction and gravitation, Jack.’

‘Traction! .gravalation! Dicks’onry words! Dicks’onry words! Your ph’los’phers get the biggest words in the dicks’onry o’ purpose to gull and gammon simpletons,—that’s my opinion. If fowlk talk about what they don’t know nowt about, they hole themselves in them dicks’onry words.’

‘But you can’t disprove what they say, Jack.’

‘Can’t I? I’ll tell you what, young landsman,—I’ve been nearly every where on the say, and, take my word for it, it’s as flat as my hand.’

Here we come upon a party of lively youths, members of a Mutual Improvement Society—literary characters—orators who talk about ‘the spirit of the age’ and have certain transcendental notions about ‘a good time coming.’ You hear some discussing the problem how the sea is impregnated with salt. One, you observe, is apostrophising the billows with becoming

action, and pouring out words that burn. Another has got into the middle of Byron's address to the Ocean, and seems to be sticking fast in 'the slime' out of which 'the monsters' are made. Further on, we meet Miss Scrimples, who is 'improving' the scene to some of her scholars. She is discoursing 'with unction,' to use her own phrase, on the works of creation and the wonders of the great deep.

No sooner had the excursionists each said his say and looked his look, than they severally in parties begin to spread themselves out in every direction, in quest of some room which they might call their own for the day. When each set has engaged a suitable lodging, their baskets are unpacked, provisions in abundance are spread forth, and a plentiful breakfast is provided. Tea, and bread and butter, and sandwiches, and pork pies, constitute a substantial meal with which to begin the day. The journey has been long and the sea breeze is already provocative of appetite.

The genteel visitors to such places as Dolphinpool do not like these cheap trips; and it is more than probable that sometimes conduct may be witnessed and language heard on the occasion of such visitations which may not be quite consistent with the usages of refined society. Neither are such excursionists general

favourites with the resident population; for they mostly bring their own provisions, and do not spend very much money in the town. They are of a class, too, even to the boy of ten, who have a pretty accurate notion of the value of sixpence. But as a day spent by the seaside is a great boon to our toiling operatives, it becomes our gentry to lay aside their sentimental delicacy for the day; and it is well for the tradespeople to be content with what they obtain, even if it be not enough to satisfy the watering-place appetite.

And now that the members of that multitudinous party have found their several lodgings and taken their refreshment, they start out for their respective diversions. Along the beach the Mudlingtonians are scattered far and wide—a promiscuous class, somewhat ungainly to the eye, as a rule, but full of vigorous life, and enjoying themselves according to their peculiar tastes. Here we fall in with a party of young men and young women who are walking along the sands, wondering at dead star-fish, picking up pebbles, and all the while indulging in their rough jokes expressed with no ill-meaning whatever, but somewhat more demonstratively than would be seemly for a select party in a genteel drawing-room.

‘Loo’ thee, Tom; here’s a little ship,’ says

one of them, pointing to a boat that was lying at high water-mark on the shore.

‘Aye,’ replies Tom, eyeing the boat curiously, ‘and how has it gotten up here, I wonder? It maun ha’ ta’en a steam-engine to draw it, I reckon; but I can see no marks of horse or engine. The folk here maun be mighty strong wi’ their saut wayter, if they’ve carried this ship up here ’bout its touching grewnd.’

Moving towards the tide the party came up to one of those unique characters which are only found at watering places,—fisherman, or boatman, or machine-bather, as the case might be—a comical figure, upon whose rough hirsute countenance many storms had beaten, and over whose grey, uncombed head many winters had passed, who had so long dabbled in salt water that he might have become amphibious, rather more fish than flesh; whose round shoulders were enveloped in a rough blue worsted jersey and overlapped with braces resembling horse-girths, and whose stout legs protruded from trousers of marine shape and colour, rolled up at the ankles and unartistically patched behind with a cloth of different colour. The Mudling-tonians eyed him wonderingly. To them he was a novel specimen of the human species, if he fairly came under that category at all.

‘Holloa, maester,’ shouted one of the party

to the old man, ‘con yo’ tell us how yon little ship has gotten up there? There’s no mark of engine or hosses, as we can see. And con yo’ tell us how yo’ll get it deawn again to th’ wayter’s edge?’

‘O,’ said the boatman, ‘the water will come up for it, and not it go down to the water, about drinking time.’

‘Where dun yo’ think we come fro’, owd fella, that yo’ talk i’ that road? We’re fro’ Yarndale—fro’ Mudlington i’ Yarndale—and folks there are no fools, I can tell thee, owd beef i’ brine.’

‘Well, and who said they were, young bobbin and shuttle?’ replied the old man, huffishly.

‘What, are yo’ not mak-ing fools on us when yo’ say as th’ wayter will come up and fetch yon little ship? Who ever he-ard of wayter rising bout rain, owd tarry breeches?’

‘I have, once or twice afore to-day, young cotton fluff. Come, get on that stone, two or three of you, for a while.’

Hereupon three or four of them, young men and women together, mounted a stone with a table surface which was on the beach, and began to laugh, and chatter, and sing; when the tide, which had reached the boulder, by degrees surrounded it and pushed forward

rapidly, as the sand was almost level there, till it had advanced on a considerable distance before the noisy party perceived their isolated and insular condition.

‘Now then,’ shouted the old man, ‘are you a-meaning to stop there till you find a watery grave hereabouts, young cotton-ballers? Have you any liking in partic’lar to become meat for shrimps and codfish? Don’t you see how the waves is running round you and straight on’ard as I call and whistle on ’em? Come, my bonny lasses, hitch up your crinnyloines, and walk through the salt water—it never gives nobody a cold—and save your precious lives, that your mothers may not have to lay you out dacent, and your looms may not be at a stand-still at Yarndale.’

On this, the party became sensible of their novel situation, and lost no time in obeying the old man’s bidding, shouting and screaming with amazement and fear. They lifted their crinolines midleg height, and hastened through the water; after which they commenced running as fast as they could, and did not stop till they reached the promenade, while the ‘ancient mariner’ watched the flying excursionists with his hands on his sides, laughing loudly, and sucking the honeycomb of revenge for their contemptuous treatment of him.

Here, you observe, is a steam-boat leaving the pier on a pleasure trip : many of the excursionists are going on board for an hour's sail at sixpence a head. Very few of the number have the slightest idea that the vessel will have to go through any other process than that of ploughing the deep with a gentle easy motion. They expect sunshine above and calm water below, and their remotest thought is that about digestive derangements. And yet to the experienced eye there are at a distance those white feathery crested waves which betoken a rolling, tumbling, pitching, dipping kind of movement, as though your craft had been indulging in strong drink, or turned acrobat—especially if she be of moderate size and ancient build. Old Jack is on board, determined once again to launch on his much-loved element ; and, as the vessel steams away, he remarks to those about him, with a sly wink, that it will be ‘ tops and bottoms with some on ’em afore they get back again into port. They’ll soon be a casting up o’ their accounts.’

‘ Wonderful thing this steam ! ’ observed a man who seemed to consider himself of some importance, as he adjusted his cravat ; ‘ steam works everywhere—underground and above ground—on water and on land.’

‘ Well enough in a factory,’ interposed Jack, ‘ no business on wayter.’

‘It has business everywhere,’ replied the other, who, as a teacher of youth in some capacity or other, thought it his duty to indoctrinate his neighbours on all fitting occasions; ‘it has business everywhere, it is doing its work everywhere; marvellous discovery, the grandest victory of the nineteenth century.’

‘It doesn’t come up to Trafalgar, by your leave, sir,’ objected Jack, touching his hat.

‘Trafalgar! Waterloo! pooh! my man, pooh!—what are these triumphs to the triumphs of invention and science? To think that in a jug of water there should be as much power as in—I don’t know how many horses! We shall soon do everything by steam; we shall plough by steam and harrow by steam and reap by steam; we shall make steam our servant in everything.’

‘Will you tell me this, sir?’ inquired a funny looking little man of the group,—‘shall we eat and drink by steam, and get wed by steam, and be buried by steam?’

‘And will parsons preach by steam?’ asked another; ‘will Sunday School managers “improve” their subjects by steam?’

‘Quite another thing,’ retorted the lecturer, —quite another matter.’

‘If you please, sir,’ said a little boy who had

been listening attentively,—‘if you please, sir, can you tell us what steam is?’

‘What is it? why, yes,—steam, my boy, is a—a—steam, my boy, is a bucket of water in a profuse state of perspiration;’ and the scientific man seemed well-pleased with his definition.

A party of some dozen, begging for a fitting tune from the band, would have extemporised a dance; but they soon began to knock against each other like nine-pins, and to find that their brisk movements did not quite consist with stomachic sedativeness.

On one part of the deck Mr. Bompas had got a knot of listeners around him. He is expatiating on his favourite theme, and drawing many similitudes from the scene around him. He is enlarging on the freedom of the winds and waters. ‘Look,’ he apostrophised with a sweep of his arm,—‘look at them blue rolling billies! Ar’nt they free? Can yo’ squeeze ’em into a tub or a biler? See, too, how this wind blows? Yo canno’ cork it in a bottle: it’s free to blow as it likes. Behold this glorious orb of day.’

Here the preacher ceased: he turned a pale green colour; and without asking leave he rushed to the side of the vessel, knocking down an old woman who had been listening to his homily. The convulsions of his frame

were very violent as he propitiated old Neptune with an extemporaneous libation; and while his admirers regarded him with sympathy, many who thought of him less favourably were amused at his involuntary contortions. Jack, who had entertained a great contempt for him at all times—which feeling had settled into positive disgust since the affray at the public meeting—seemed to rejoice at the prostration of the strong man. Indeed, he carried his animosity so far as to go up to him in his distress and offer him in a seemingly friendly spirit ‘a quid of beautiful baccy as a certain cure for say-sickness.’

And now, others out of an unwilling sympathy, began to follow Mr. Bompas’s example. The steamer was tossing and rolling about in a very awkward manner, and Mud-lingtonian legs began to experience some difficulty in maintaining a firm foothold. Jack, with one, seemed to manage better than his neighbours with two. Esther was there with her party; she was apprehensive lest she might become a companion in affliction with Mr. Bompas, and she applied to Jack, who was now an oracle, for some preventive. He advised her to stand with her face to the wind, and sing a lively air; when she might escape the visitation. Jack’s antidote she immediately

put to the trial : she struck up a sprightly ditty in good earnest ; but, as she was just turning a grace note, she suddenly stopped, bowed her head, and yielded to the inevitable.

Indeed, there were few on board who did not feel more or less those sensations of nausea which are peculiar to a sea-cradle ; there were few who did not welcome *terra firma* again, though it seemed to reel under their feet.

And now you see the cheap trippists of the day from all parts of the country scattered along the sands and indulging in the pursuits and amusements most congenial with their respective tastes. The bathing-machines are in much request, while some of the youths regard such caravans as needless superfluities. Equestrian and asinine exercise, again, seems to be popular, though the ladies and gentlemen who are mounted will carry with them apparently sundry aches and bruises for some days to come. Here is a man who has never been on horseback before ; he is rushing away wildly on a gaunt, shambling animal, maintaining a precarious seat, with elbows up and legs seemingly intoxicated : it is an even wager whether he dashes into the sea, or disperses a crowd of pedestrians, or charges a squadron of bathing-machines ; but he is clearly of opinion that he is ‘witching the world with noble horsemanship,’

and he dismounts with an air of triumph, as though he intended to say, 'Beat that if you can.' Here is a lusty young woman on a donkey: she is undergoing the pleasurable process of being trotted into a palpitation; and now, when she considers her enjoyment at the height, the animal bolts, and down she rolls on the sand, exhibiting a pair of substantial legs. She is nothing the worse, so gets up, shakes herself, gives the donkey boy a 'saucing' for hitting it out of season, and walks away, satisfied with the performance. Another young woman of portly form is dismounting from a donkey after an hour's jolting, observing to her friend—'Bless me, I don't know how it is, but my stomick does not feel a bit better.'

Here Mr. Corby is surrounded by a number of boys and girls who have been racing on their donkeys as earnestly as jockeys for the Derby. He is delivering to them one of his slow-toned interminable addresses, no portion of which can they fully comprehend.

'Now, my boys and girls, ahem!' he prosed on, 'moderate your feelings—beware of animal excitement—'

'What!' inquires one, 'monno' we ride on jackassess, Maester Corby?'

'Why, boy, I don't mean that exactly, by

animal excitement; I mean that you should control your wild sensations—'

'What!' asked another, 'monno' we play at bang-about and run races, Maester Corby?'

'Well, it is a questionable point in Christian morals, ahem! upon which you are asking for information; racing involves one of those issues of chance which moralists—'

'O,' interposed Mr. Jenkins, who had just come up; 'let them ride—let them ride.'

'It is a problem to my mind whatever it may be to the mind of others,' retorted Mr. Corby, with a malicious jest, 'how far riding becomes a professor of the truth at all; at any rate, I have no hesitation in asserting unreservedly, and I speak it advisedly, that following a pack of hounds on horseback, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, is unbefitting a man of serious mind: no one can gallop wildly on horseback, whether *nolens* or *volens*, on Christian principles.'

Mr. Jenkins understood the taunt and bit his lip; but he thought it better to waive the equestrian controversy, and wait for some occasion when he could administer an effectual retort.

Multifarious indeed are the occupations of those excursionists on the promenade, on the broad sands, on the lofty cliffs, and on the wide

sea ; and yet is there enjoyment for all. Some may be seen turning the beach into their playground, and rushing about wildly like greyhounds in sport. Some may be seen listening to negro minstrelsy, or watching a conjurer with his cups and balls, or admiring a smart lady dancing in pattens, or gathering round that ubiquitous and universally attractive gentleman called 'Punch.' Others, young men and women—perchance, boys and girls—are roaming along by the water's edge, engaged in the gentler pastime of courting or 'company-keeping.' What can these juveniles be talking about? Are they indulging in positive sentiment, or are they making love indirectly, by talking about the cockles and starfish at their feet? Among our manufacturing populations boys begin to make love and think of marriage as soon as they assume stand-up collars and coat-tails, occasionally before. If they postpone such thoughts till they are twenty-one, they fancy they are getting into years—sinking into 'the sear and yellow leaf.' Mr. Corby sets his face steadfastly against such precocity; and now, he fixes upon two or three couples, and wishes them to stop a moment, in order that he may address to them a few words of admonition.

'Now, boys and girls,' he commences, 'I think it my duty to give you a word of advice

on the matter of "keeping company" as you call it: it is a very momentous step to begin such a course: you have no business to be thinking about matrimony, my young friends—'

'Well,' retorted one of the lads bluntly, 'did you and Mrs. Corby never court afore you were wed?'

'Ahem! that is another matter: it may be that we did somewhat; but that was after we had arrived at years of discretion and understanding.'

'And haven't we?'

'No, my boy, I think not quite, as yet; I might, I think, very properly advise you, as it was said of old, to "tarry in Jericho till your beards were grown."'

Monkhouse and Shorland sauntered about on a tour of observation, and felt enjoyment from seeing it in others. Here old Sally's two fellow-lodgers came up to them: they had been treated to their 'day's out' by Mrs. Shorland. The more voluble of the two commenced by saying that old Sally had been left at home, as she was too lame to venture on the rail, and, poor old body, 'welly done for' and she then diverged into a speech of thanks to Shorland and Monkhouse for taking them to the 'saut-wayter,' wishing them 'prosperation' all the days of their life, which address Monkhouse

cut short by giving her a shilling and getting away. Then a stout mechanic came up to Shorland with his son, to thank him for taking the lad into his counting-house. The man was a little anxious, and wishing his son to appear to the best, kept repeating, as they walked up, 'Pu' up thy collar, John,' which injunction John regularly obeyed; but as he always pulled up the same side, he stood before Shorland and Monkhouse a fine looking lad enough, but with one side of the collar up to his eye and the other scarcely appearing over his neckerchief. Further on they came across a Mudlington tradesman who had been a passenger in the same carriage with them.

'Well, we meet again,' said Shorland.

'Yes,' replied the man, with a grave look, whose thirst had evidently been excited by the salt air,—'yes, and I hope we shall meet again in ——'

'Hush! hush!' interrupted Monkhouse; on which the Mudlingtonian seemed rather offended, not seeing why his society should be repudiated anywhere.

It is surprising what a variety of influence alcoholic drink has upon different constitutions. Some people grow sentimental upon it; some, noisy; some, hilarious; some, disputatious; some, quarrelsome; some, musical; some,

grave; some, devotional. Is this simply a development of the original idiosyncrasy? Is it evidence that the old proverb is correct,—*in vino veritas*,—in other words, there is truth in strong drink, whether it be wine or rum and water?

‘And how have you got on here so far?’ asked Shorland of the man, who was a decent Mudlington shopkeeper.

‘Well, to tell you the truth, I’ve had a glass or two of rum and water. But, sir, it was needful for me. When I geet here, I would have a bathe. Well, I did not quite understand these say-wayters; and when I geet well in, a wave coom up, and whopped me over; and no sooner could I get on my legs, than another coom up, and whopped me ower agean; and I began to think I was going to be drowned, for the saut wayter geet into my ears, and into my meawth, and into my een: so I scratted out and took a drop of rum and wayter. Besides, somehow or other, I forgeet abeawt my flannel shirt,—I did na doff¹ it and I went in with it on: so, I’ve had to wring it out, and dry it.’

‘A brave man,’ said Monkhouse to Shorland, ‘struggling with the storms of fate, is said to

¹ Doff, do off, and don, do on, words found in old English writings, are still in use in Lancashire.

be a spectacle for the deities to look on: our friend that has just gone is nothing out the way to look on, in his coat, waistcoat, and trousers; but we cannot say what he might be, when struggling with the storms of wind and water.'

'Well, how goes?' (how are you going on?) said a man familiarly to Shorland, whose back was turned on him. Then, correcting himself,—'O, I did na mean yo'. I thought yo' wor Toddy Shaw o' Bornley.'

'Then Toddy must be a good-looking chap, if you took me for him?'

'Nay, he's nowt i' partie'lar;' and the Burnley man walked on very carelessly.

Here we meet again with our friend Mrs. Whymper. She had been advised to go upon the water for the benefit of her health, and as an antidote against brooding cares. She had accordingly joined a party who had engaged a stout sail-boat, and had gone out a considerable distance to sea, and been tossed about rather more rudely than they had expected. They are landing now in somewhat doleful mood, and Mrs. Liptrott, with several children around her, welcomes Mrs. Whymper on shore again.

'And how have you enjyed yourself, Mrs. Whymper?' inquired Mrs. Liptrott in her lively way; 'I hope you've had a pleasant sail.'

‘Well, Mrs. Liptrott, I’ve enjyed myself but inferior: I’ve been turned upside down fearfully in my inside; I’ve been o’ of a wakkur, ever since I got into that abominable boat. I’ll never sail again for enjoyment, Mrs. Liptrott, as long as I live,—I’ll give you my word for it.’

There was something very amusing in the association of Mrs. Whymper’s face with the idea of enjoyment. It was the very picture of lassitude and depression. In the morning she had been got up in a stiff and starchy fashion: her face was firm: her dress was crimp and well-ironed. Now her features were let out; her mouth was relaxed; her limbs hung loose; her dress saturated with salt water fell heavily about her; even the stiffening of her ideas had been washed out. She had been unstarched in mind, body, and costume by the winds and waves.

‘You look but poorly, Mrs. Whymper, I see; but let me be your doctor; I’ve got a bottle here as will make you pick up your crumbs and look pe-art again. Come, take a drop of my “soothing syrup,” Mrs. Whymper—“a real blessing to wives and mothers,”—ha! ha! ha! Before taken, you know, to be well shaken.’

‘Indeed, Mrs. Liptrott,’ said Mrs. Whymper, smiling faintly, ‘I’ll give you my word, I’ve been well shaken, both inside and out.’

Here a lemonade bottle containing rum and water is produced ; Mrs. Whymper drinks and is refreshed ; and the two walk away together in friendly conversation.

And now the time fixed for the return of the train draws near, and crowds of tired excursionists with empty baskets, soiled dresses, and bronzed faces, are wending their way up to the station. And on arriving there, a scene meets the eye which in common phrase ‘ baffles description :’ for tumult and confusion it far exceeds that which was witnessed before starting in the morning. The journey down was fair sailing, but how are the difficulties of returning to be surmounted ? The descent to Avernus was easy ; but how get back ? ‘ Sed revocare gradum, hic labor, hoc opus est.’ It must be borne in mind that on that day a dozen cheap trains from different localities had poured their living freights into Dolphinpool ; and as evening approached, and the said trains were severally despatched homewards, at irregular and very precarious intervals, they contained a promiscuous agglomeration from all these heterogeneous trippists. Church members and Independents, Wesleyans and Baptists, Unitarians and Romanists, were mixed up, if not always in ‘ peace and fraternity’ yet ‘ higglety-pigglety’—discordant atoms—

unassimilative essences—unamalgamating elements. And now we find, in the station and around the station, a sort of ‘chaos come again.’ About five times as many are waiting to occupy the next train as it can by any power of hydraulic condensation be made to contain; so that when it draws up a universal scramble may be looked for, however anxious the officials may be to appropriate it to its morning’s occupants. But even while the crowds are in expectation, the scene is anything but one of silent suspense. It exhibits much life and animation, and not altogether of that amiable kind which was observable in the morning. Then everyone was full of hope and vigour, and determined to be pleased; now every one is jaded and worn out, effete and inclined to be sulky: then everyone was under the influence of natural sensations alone; now here and there are those who have been qualifying the effects of the salt air by sundry strong ‘potations pottle deep:’ then each party was distinct; now the Romanist and the Ranter stand side by side, and scowl defiance at each other. Listen to that young girl as she grins at her neighbour who is treating her with something like mockery,—‘Come, none of your Protestant imperance, Miss,—because I’ll stand none of your dirty methody tricks, you young ranting

heretic, you!’ Then there are trains from different manufacturing towns; and as the residents in several of them are called by nicknames, occasional disputations spring out of this discourteous style of nomenclature. There goes ‘a Roylton trotter!’ says one, pointing to a broad-set fellow in a strange-looking wide-awake, a fustian jacket cut square at the skirts, a ‘comfortable’ pendent from his neck, and newly washed white trousers—a youth who would to all appearance prove an ugly customer in one of the up-and-down fights with which he may not be unfamiliar. ‘There goes a Roylton trotter!’ is the jesting remark: on which the said ‘trotter’ turns round, and mutters a mysterious threat about ‘punching somebody’s yead and fettling somebody’s meawth for him.’ Here may be seen a tall, thin, blue-faced priest, ‘all shaven and shorn;’ there an Independent minister with round fat cheeks and projecting stomach; there a Wesleyan preacher scarcely able to maintain his suavity, as he is pushed about from side to side; there a Church of England Clergyman, a young Curate, who seems hardly to like his boisterous society,—having but half realised the idea that cheap trips are not for the fragile and tender. And lo! here is Mrs. Liptrott—bless her!—sorely tried by her efforts to keep

her children together in the crowd, like an old hen who had reared a brood of ducklings and chickens together; her family are continually getting scattered—and do what she will, she cannot help it,—Johnny with his spade, and Jane with her sand-basket, and Georgy with his whip, and Bobby with his intractable cap. Still, Mrs. Liptrott manages very fairly, and with a little screwing of the fiddle-strings of temper up to harmony point, she keeps in good humour, and consoles Mrs. Whympier, who has never thoroughly recovered from her sickness, and is ready to sink under the pressure of the throng. But who is this tall fellow moving about slowly at the edge of the crowd, with his mouth open and gazing upwards, as if he had thoughts above the sublunary? He has been indulging in his cups, it is to be feared; but as his long walks have excited his thirst and his thirsty propensity has only made him more thoughtful and sagacious in his looks, his failing must be dealt kindly with on the present occasion. Indeed, in some measure he commands the sympathy of the by-stander; for he walks unconscious of impending danger: while his feet are planted on the ground and his mind is roaming among the clouds, by some accident he receives a blow behind his knees, and he falls backward as though he had been struck

on the chest, having been 'hammed,' as wrestlers term it. He arises leisurely, buttons his coat leisurely, turns up the cuffs leisurely, plants one foot forward leisurely, executing a circular movement with his hands after a sparring fashion, and then leisurely demands to know who has done the deed; for he is willing and anxious to do battle with him. When no one owns to the act, he asks further with great composure whether there is any one of those around him who is prepared to defend it; for he is ready to throw down his gauntlet for any such person to take up. When no one responds, he coolly unbuttons his coat and turns down the cuffs, as if honour was satisfied, and proceeds as before to move about, looking upwards with his mouth open. See that old gentleman: he is evidently a leading personage in some Sunday School, and full of importance accordingly; we fear he is asthmatic,—he puffs and blows like an engine, and he seems to have much difficulty in finding his breath in the crowd. Then he hardly submits to his fate with the patience and resignation he is so fond of inculcating upon others: when, as is constantly happening, he gets 'squeaged' on the stomach, or kicked on the shins, or pushed forward from behind, he gives utterance to his grievances in audible tones of disgust. And

here, melancholy to relate, is friend Corby hoisting the signal of distress : one skirt of his coat has actually been torn away in the crush, leaving the half of his dorsal terminus uncovered. He is bemoaning his lot somewhat too despondingly ; though it must be admitted that he has been subjected to a severe trial of temper. ‘ You see, sir,’ he expatiates on his troubles to Shorland, who can hardly keep a serious countenance,—‘ you see, sir, my condition,—how I am, if I may be allowed the expression, semi-abbreviated as it were behind. Within my coat-pocket, sir—that which has been torn away—there are wrapped up in a silk handkerchief, a new one of the value of five shillings, some slight mementoes of Dolphinpool for my wife Johanna and my young ones at home. I know not, sir, whether the deed has been done from malice *prepense*, or from idle mischief, or from mere accident ; but it is a trial, sir, for me—a serious trial—I may say, a cross.’—It was generally believed that some of the wicked young fellows, who had frequently been told by Mr. Corby to ‘ tarry in Jericho till their beards were grown,’ had resolved to treat him to that portion of the indignity mentioned in the sacred narrative, which consisted in ‘ cutting off the garment in

the middle,' and denuding the adjacent portion of the person.—And, marked by their uniform, the members of the Mudlington band appear conspicuously among the crowd. They are, however, so pushed and jostled that they are unable to maintain themselves in a regimental group. Especially is David Bumperleigh, who carries the big drum, most unceremoniously hustled and knocked about. His eye is slightly glazed with beer, and he is evidently conscious of dignity, as being the bearer of the largest instrument; but it is no easy matter for him to make others respect his position in the crush. While he turns round to remonstrate with one rude fellow, another pushes him forward from the opposite side; while he brings his drumstick heavily on one lad's head, and makes him cry out lustily—for the head, though nothing to look at, is doubtless dear to its owner,—another boy most unceremoniously gives the other end of his drum a smart knock with his fist. Altogether, David Bumperleigh is in perplexity; he threatens, he coaxes, he appeals; he does not mind for himself; he can bear it so far as he is himself concerned: but he is jealous for the honour of melodious sounds; and above all he will stand no insult to the big drum: like our friend, as

he was wrestling with the billows, he is illustrating the sublime spectacle of a brave man struggling with the storms of fate.

After waiting a long time on the platform, the party from Mudlington are packed up and despatched homeward; but, O, what a wearisome journey back again! Lingered everywhere! Coming to a standstill often! Backing, shunting, stopped by trains ahead, and waiting for expresses to pass! ‘Deary me! Deary me!’ moans one, as they are approaching Yarndale—and this is the expression of a universal sentiment,—‘it is now nearly one o’clock in the morning, and the Company promised to get us in yesterday at nine,—we’ve been four hours on the road; I never will go in a cheap trip again,—no, never, as long as I live!’ Whereas each passenger gets to bed, though at an untimely hour, rises refreshed in the morning, though slightly stiff, and is ready for another such an excursion on the following day.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE SANDS OF LIFE SINKING TO A CLOSE.

WHILST we are in the midst of our pleasures, or absorbed in our pursuits of business, or lounging at our ease, how little do we reflect on the diversified phases of human life that everywhere surround us, and are by our side, unseen and unrecognised though they be! While one man is entertaining his friends at an Apician banquet, and the laugh and joke are circulating with the wine, another, separated from him only by a brick partition, but a thousand miles away in observation and acquaintance, is tossing painfully on a bed of sickness and awaiting the approach of that mysterious visitor who was born with time and who has since been roaming through the world, and knocking with an impartial hand at the door of the palace and the cottage.

‘Ah!’ writes Thomson,

Ah! little think they, while they dance along,
How many feel, this very moment, death
And all the sad variety of pain.

See that lively merchant on the Exchange—he has just made 15,000*l.* by a lucky bargain! He knows not—perhaps, would not care if he knew—that he is side by side with one who has made himself a hopeless insolvent by his last ruinous venture. So the world turns round. Some men laugh while others weep; and all do so by turns. The arrangement is doubtless a wise one, though we may not always be able to thread its labyrinth, or disentangle its intricacies, or reconcile its contrarieties. Universal ease would be as fatal as universal irritation: it is out of the conflict of opposite principles that a system of moral and social order is educed, befitting probationary creatures.

Thus, while the operative population of Yarndale was enjoying its annual Whitsuntide gala, indulging in strong-limbed romps and boisterous mirth, there were those in that city who were pining away in sickness, and but ill able to bear the weight of the passing hour. Among these was blind Ellen. Not that she was entirely forgotten in that jocund season. An occasional reveller of the Mudlingtonian School party would now and then pause, and express a wish that she could have joined in the excursions. She was so well known among them from her vocal powers as well as her amiable

and obliging disposition, that there were few who did not feel in some degree grieved at her absence. All were acquainted with the cause of it; for she had long ceased to sing at public worship, and to appear at any tea-party or pastime; and the roughest lad or lass was ready to express regret that she was not likely to be seen again among them with her bright sightless eyes, delicate features, and melodious voice.

Poor Ellen! And yet, why should we say, poor Ellen? She was passing lightly through that sickness which, as death's precursor, weighs so heavily on many; she was passing through it, supported by a power higher than her own, and resigned to the supreme will of that Father who makes all things work together for good to his children; she was passing through it cheered and elevated by that Christian faith which can alone give contentment in sickness, and which sometimes infuses into the soul, even in bodily decay, a 'joy unspeakable and full of comfort,' giving strength to the spiritual portion of our being while the material is wasting away in feebleness and exhaustion. Why, then, say, poor Ellen? If a heathen historian could point a wise moral from the tale of Cleobis and Biton, may not we, with purer faith and more exalted hopes, discover

the truth and learn the lesson, that the young Christian's departure is an event to be rejoiced at, as being a removal from the evil to come, and an admission into a higher and happier state of existence than our gross and earth-born faculties can now comprehend.

The Horners, Ellen's foster parents, had now removed to a neat cottage in the suburbs of Yarndale, not far distant from the house of Mr. and Mrs. Graham, in order that the invalid might have the benefit of a purer atmosphere and all the comfort and quiet which the country could afford. Mrs. Horner had ever entertained towards Ellen the same feeling as if she had been her own daughter, and now she tended her as affectionately as could the fondest mother. She had changed her residence partly from her own inclination, and partly at the suggestion of friends. Graham had promised that whatever additional expense might accrue to her in her exceptional circumstances, she would be re-imbursed; but she repudiated altogether such an idea: her husband was in good work, she said, and Ellen had saved some money, and, however much obliged she might be by such an offer of assistance, she had no doubt but that she could provide every comfort for her foster daughter without trespassing on the generosity

of others. And she faithfully kept her word. Ellen's rooms looked into a pleasant little garden; they were arranged with the most scrupulous neatness; her parlour was now almost unused, but her furniture was there, clean and bright, with her piano, which remained unopened. Her bed-room was the picture of cleanliness, with its muslin window-curtains, its milk-white bed-hangings, and its freshly-smelling linen. Presents were received in plenty, supplying those luxuries which good Mrs. Horner might not have been able to obtain, such as port-wine of the best quality and a suitable age, jellies, preserves, and delicacies which might be expected to provoke the appetite and support the strength of a consumptive patient. Her chamber, too, was never without its stand of fresh flowers. While the wealthy sometimes culled from their conservatories and spacious gardens a rich bouquet as a present to her, still more frequently did the young people from the schools gather among the dells and woods a nosegay of honeysuckles, primroses, hyacinths, ferns, sweet-briar, and wild-flowers—or, making their purchases in the market, tie together a tasteful posy of roses and lilies and carnations—to be placed by Ellen's bedside on the Sunday morning.

‘You are better to-day, Ellen, I am glad to see,’ said Monkhouse to her. He saw her regularly three or four times a week in the character of her pastor ; and she was always anxious for his visits. He had now acquired considerable experience in a sick chamber, and, from his insight into human nature, he was able to adapt his lessons and ministrations to the peculiar wants of each patient. He had not been called to visit any sick person from whom he had derived so much satisfaction as from Ellen. Independently of the special interest which belonged to her position and circumstances, she exhibited a disposition of singular attractiveness as disease crept on and strength failed. She was well pleased to converse at all times on religious subjects and on her own inner sense of devotion, while she was never over-demonstrative, or too fond of parading her secret impressions by extravagant ebullitions and doubtful fervour. What a variety of disposition meets the clergyman in his visits to sick rooms, from the taciturn and almost sullen temper which will make no response to inquiry or suggestion, to the loud and noisy enthusiasm which is sometimes of questionable genuineness from its fluent unreserve and easy assurance !

‘I am no worse, I am much obliged to you,

sir,—indeed, my cough is a little easier, and I have some relief by changing from the bed to the sofa,’ Ellen replied. She was lying loosely dressed on the couch, by which occasional change she hoped to avoid that unceasing and painful irritation of a broken skin attendant often on an emaciated patient from lying long in one posture.

To the very sensitive and somewhat inexperienced mind there may seem to be something of indelicacy in such visits; but that is purely imaginary. The tender and delicate lady who in health might profess to detect an impropriety in them, soon yields up these fanciful scruples when sickness creeps on with slow foot, and is not reluctant to receive the visits of the clergyman, even though she has to appear unadorned by art and wasted by sickness. Instinctive shrinkings and conventional usages vanish at the dawning of the long future.

‘It is a great mercy,’ Monkhouse continued, ‘when sickness is unaccompanied by severe pain, and is at the same time lightened by human aid and social comforts. To be without suffering in illness is scarcely possible, for weakness itself is a weariness and a burden: still, there is a wide difference between simple lassitude and excruciating agony. In my visitations I see ailments in every form. I

have just left a man who is racked with pain and unable to concentrate his thoughts from the severity of his sufferings; and sometimes I see this weight of bodily and mental pressure aggravated by poverty and want. As therefore we are, in God's providence, to expect sickness sooner or later, it must always be regarded as a mercy when it comes with a light hand, and is alleviated by sympathy and kindness and the comforts of life.'

'Undoubtedly,' replied Ellen, 'it is a mercy for which we cannot be too thankful, and in this matter no sick person has greater cause for thankfulness than myself. I have as little pain as can possibly be expected from my complaint; I have full leisure and ability to meditate on my condition as a sinful and accountable creature, and yet as one who trusts, through the merits of the Redeemer, to inherit an immortality of peace and joy. I have every comfort in those who are with me, and am supplied not only with what is necessary, but with every luxury which the most craving could desire. My friends show me far more kindness and attention than I deserve. My life has been all along an illustration of God's goodness, and according to his promise he is not forsaking me at its close.

‘Many may have had all your blessings, Ellen—and more, it may be—and have felt none of your thankfulness. But when good things come, and gratitude is entertained to the great Giver for all his temporal and spiritual mercies, it is an earnest that for such an one there are still greater gifts in store.’

‘We doubt not, sir, that God hath prepared his good things for them that love him and trust in the Atonement of his Son. This is an encouraging thought, and one that is well calculated to raise us above our little trials here,—that there remaineth an eternity of rest for the people of God. Thus we can understand how our light afflictions here, which are but for a moment, are not to be considered in contrast with that far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory that shall be.’

‘Yes, Ellen, life at the longest is but for a moment; its joys and sorrows are as empty and vanishing as the bubbles on the surface of the stream. If, therefore, a few years be cut off from the ordinary duration of human life, it is to the Christian a deprivation not to be regarded—indeed, to be regarded with satisfaction. God’s time is the best time for our removal; and it matters little whether it be to-morrow or forty years hence. On this subject

the mightiest intellect may properly adopt the prayer of the child :—

Days, months, and years will have an end,
Eternity hath none ;
'Twill always have as long to spend
As when it first begun.
Great God ! an infant cannot tell
What such a thing may be :
I only pray that I may dwell
That long, long time with thee.'

‘ Those are beautiful lines, sir, containing a momentous truth. The person who looks back upon a long life seems to retrace in his memory a period scarcely longer than I do : the difference between many years and few here is almost imaginary by contrast with the hereafter.’

‘ Still, you would be surprised, if you saw, as I do, the determined clinging to life which some manifest even in the oldest age. I had lately on my list as a patient a woman of ninety-five. She was living in a most unhealthy part of the town,—and it is a singular fact that instances of extreme longevity are found in such-like places. She was living alone in a back room, having long survived her generation ; she had nothing but her allowance from the Board of Guardians ; she was smoke-dried and encrusted with dirt, and to all appearance was

the very type of wretchedness. When I was first called to see her, I thought she would not have lived six hours, and I told her so ; but she would not believe it ; she said she should “ come round,” and “ come round ” she did, marvellously enough. At length after great persuasion I prevailed on her to go into the workhouse. Whether she be living yet I do not know ; but to the last of my acquaintance with her, she was as tenacious of life as a girl of sixteen.’

‘ At that age, sir, the sensibilities become blunted, I imagine. I should not have looked forward with pleasure at any time to such a length of life.’

‘ With you probably the sense of life in its ruder enjoyments has never been so intense as with some.’

‘ That no doubt is in some degree correct, sir. I have never joined in the rougher amusements and pleasures belonging to my age, from want of ability as well as of inclination ; but it must not be supposed, as it sometimes is, that the blind have not many enjoyments peculiar to themselves. To be without sight is a great deprivation : it must be a delightful thing to see the face of nature in all its beauties, the human form in its wonderful structure, the landscape in all its varieties, the setting sun in

its grandeur, and the stars in their brightness,—the heavens declaring the glory of God and the firmament telling his handiwork;—but we have other gifts to compensate for this defect: our sense of hearing is sharpened in discrimination of sound; our powers of imagination, I suspect, are strengthened; our faculty of picturing objects to the eye of the mind is keener than ordinary; our capability of acquiring a knowledge of form and figure by touch is greater than you would conceive. So that, even to the blind, there is much to make amends for their defect. Much of our happiness must doubtless consist in a proper tone of mind and heart,—we are thrown so much within ourselves; and if the intellect be clear and the feelings well regulated, we are capable of more enjoyments than many would suppose.’

‘I do not doubt it at all,’ replied Monkhouse; ‘in the order of Providence, the defect of one organ is compensated by the strength of others. The sensibility to touch and sound, we know, is often extraordinary in those deprived of sight; and from the latter faculty you must have derived great enjoyment.’

‘Yes, music has ever been a great solace to me; and in life generally I have had my fair share of happiness. Indeed, sir, I am not sure whether I have not been guilty of some slight

repining during the Whitweek lately past. When my acquaintances have come to me, and told me where they were going and what they intended to do, and said that I must get better and go with them, I am afraid I entertained a passing wish—foolish as it was—once more to visit the green fields, and feel the warm sunshine, and hear the rustling of the full-leaved boughs, and listen to the singing of the birds, and laugh at the merry romps of the young people.’

‘There can be no great harm in such a feeling: so long as we are here we cannot divest ourselves entirely of the material and earthly, nor is it intended that we should. While we are in the world, we must employ its resources for our convenience and edification; nor are we denied its innocent recreations. It is only when we leave it that we shall be thoroughly spiritualised beings.’

‘Yes, that is very true, sir; and it is a marvellous thought! We shall not stand in need of our bodily senses; there will be neither blindness nor deafness nor deprivation of speech. With our very imperfect faculties we cannot fully comprehend this state; but it will come to pass upon us, I feel assured. It is an elevating reflection to a person in my condition, that on leaving this world, I may be privileged for

the first time to see as others, and that at the restoration of all things, when body and soul shall be re-united, and there shall be new heavens, and the glories of the eternal kingdom shall be revealed, I may arise to the full possession of sight, in sense and spirit, and join in those marvellous strains in comparison with which our songs of praise here are dull and unmusical, cold and dead.'

Monkhouse now, as was his custom, read and commented on some portion of Scripture, and offered up prayer; after which he took his departure, with many expressions of gratitude from his patient.

Ellen had her visits, also, from those who had been accustomed to associate with her in health; and one evening about this time a party called upon her, to tell her about their gaities in Whitweek. They brought with them some rich fruit and a bunch of flowers, with many compliments from others, who were unable to accompany them. Ellen was now becoming perceptibly weaker, and was not able to join with them in conversation for any length of time; but she expressed her pleasure at seeing them, and listened with attention to their narratives. They made her smile by describing Mr. Bompas's ludicrous situation, as he was earnest in the preaching of his free gospel and was cut

short in his sermon; and they told her of many incidents, grave and gay, which were likely to interest her.

‘We won’t give up all hope of seeing you out again once more with us, Ellen,’ said one of them; ‘it does not look like the same when you are not there.’

‘You must not expect that,’ she replied. ‘You see my state at present, and I am getting gradually weaker. I have some time ago given up all hope of recovery; and I am thankful that God in his mercy is beckoning me with so gentle a hand. I feel greatly obliged to you for your kindness and sympathy; and, as this may most likely be our last meeting, you will not take it amiss if I advise you all to keep in mind that you must one day be in my condition. You are all young now and full of life; but you know not how soon death may come to you. You are surrounded by many temptations, and without watchfulness you might fall into many snares. You will not be offended, then, if I exhort you to “remember now your Creator in the days of your youth”—to walk so that you may be ready to depart at a short notice, if your Lord should call you. And then this will not be our last meeting: we shall reappear, not in weakness and languor, but in strength and joy; we shall meet again with higher

faculties ; and we shall recognise each other even more distinctly than we now do.'

After some serious and edifying conversation the party sang a hymn with which they were all familiar, and in which Ellen's voice had often been heard above the rest in time of health. The tune was that adapted from Beethoven, which has become so well known from its association with Heber's missionary hymn.

In humble adoration
Our youthful hearts we raise ;
Thou Rock of our salvation !
To Thee we hymn our praise ;—
To Thee, whose arm is o'er us,
Our Prophet, Priest and King,
In one harmonious chorus,
With grateful hearts we sing.

While thousands blindly wander
Where pride or passion guides ;
While thousands rashly squander
The gifts Thy hand provides :
Instruction's voice has brought us
To living streams of truth ;
Thy Word and Church have taught us
The safeguard of our youth.

Though worldly comforts fail us,
And want our table spread ;
Though wind and storm assail us,
As life's rude path we tread ;

Thy grace which knows no measure
Shall largely deck our board
With earth's sublimest treasure,—
The manna of Thy Word.

Thou Rock of our salvation,
The Guardian of our path,
Protector of our nation,
Defender of our faith,—
To Thee, whose arm is o'er us,
Our Prophet, Priest and King,
In one harmonious chorus,
With grateful hearts we sing.

When the hymn was ended, they each of them kissed Ellen affectionately, most of them in tears, having a presentiment that it would be their last meeting here.

CHAPTER XX.

AN UNKNOWN VISITOR.

NOT long after the incidents related in the last chapter, as Monkhouse was occupying himself in his regular morning's preparation of three hours for his Sunday's sermons and lectures, his waitress entered with the message that a lady had just arrived, and was wishful to speak with him. It was unnecessary, she said, to send up her card, for he was not acquainted with her. In this there was nothing singular; and Monkhouse requested that she might be shown into his room, expecting to find her one of those ladies who engage themselves in parochial matters, and spend their time in collecting subscriptions, or visiting cases of distress, or otherwise doing good according to their peculiar views and inclinations.

In this, however, he was mistaken. The lady was a stranger; from her manner and appearance she was not a district visitor or even a resident in the neighbourhood. She

was about forty, perhaps under, with a pale, pensive expression of countenance, which bore traces of some enduring struggle between the beauty and the sorrow of youth, continued between the matured comeliness and the lingering regrets of riper years. Her dress, without being extravagant, was of that character which betokened wealth and fashion; and in all her movements there were the marks of one who had been brought up in the best society. When she spoke, too, these antecedent indications were confirmed: her remarks evinced a considerable amount of intelligence, and her mode of expression was ladylike and refined.

‘I presume I am addressing the Rev. Mr. Monkhouse,’ she said.

‘Yes,’ Monkhouse replied; ‘and may I ask to whom I am indebted for this visit?’

‘I would give you my name with pleasure, but it is hardly material to my present object. I am not a resident in this part of the country, and probably our acquaintance may cease after this brief interview. After saying this, it may perhaps seem ungracious to ask whether you are not related to Sir Richard and Lady Monkhouse, of Grassdown Park.’

‘Yes; I am their son: are you acquainted with our family?’

‘I am not, personally; but some of my con-

nections have known your parents. From the neighbourhood around here, so far as I have seen it, you do not seem to have chosen a very attractive sphere of duty, nor should I have thought one congenial with your pursuits and habits, if I imagine right in believing you to be a student of distinction and a Fellow of one of the Colleges at Oxford.'

'Before I came here, certainly, I spent much of my time in books: but how are we to learn the duties of a clergyman, except by intercourse with human nature in its lower forms of ignorance and want?'

'Very true, very true; it is only by mingling with life's trials, that we can know what life is in its various aspects: the ease and frivolities of the wealthy afford but a poor school for the exercise of benevolence and the discipline of duty.'

'May I ask, ma'am, in what I can be of service to you?' inquired Monkhouse, who observed a hesitation in the lady, and an apparent reluctance to enter on the real object of her visit.

'You will excuse me, I am sure,' she replied with some diffidence, 'if the purport of my call may seem strange to you. But to come at once to the matter on which I am wishful to gain information,—Are you not acquainted with a

young person named Ellen—I do not know her surname—who is blind, and, I believe, has been so from her birth?’

‘Yes, I have known her some time,—in fact, since I came here.’

‘She has been in easy circumstances, I have some reason to suppose, and has never wanted the comforts of life?’

‘Yes; she has been able to support herself in respectability till lately, and has always maintained the highest character. She is a great favourite with all who know her, and deserves to be.’

‘Till lately, you say: is she not able to support herself now?’

‘She is on her death-bed.’

‘The lady slightly started, and a shadow crossed her features; but she seemed to have attained to great power of self-control, and she immediately resumed an appearance of composure. Monkhouse observed the passing flush on her countenance, and was confident that she felt a stronger interest in the welfare of Ellen than she was willing to admit. Who could she be? Why come to inquire after a girl whose parents were unknown? Could she reveal the mystery of her birth? Was she one who had taken part in casting out the young child? Could she be her mother? These thoughts were

passing through Monkhouse's mind; but of course they were only vague conjectures. Then, on scanning the lady's face, he fancied he could trace some resemblance in the features to those of Ellen: it might only be fancy; but he could not put away the thought. She was taller than Ellen: both in figure and face she was on a larger scale; neither had she a complexion so delicate or features so finely moulded. Still, Monkhouse conjured up a likeness,—it might be in imagination only, but he could not divest himself of the belief that it existed, and the more he ventured to gaze, the more he was confirmed in the idea. Was the lady married? She had not removed her light-coloured, well-fitting kid glove, nor did she seem inclined to do so.

‘Mr. Monkhouse,’ she continued with considerable self-possession, ‘I have a desire to see this young girl, and probably you will not object to conduct me to her. Why I wish for this interview, it is needless to say; and probably you will not think it necessary to inquire. I ask this favour from you as the clergyman of the district, and as one whose family name is not altogether unfamiliar to me; and you will be willing perhaps to assist me without caring to be inquisitive in asking for reasons.’

It was not far to the cottage where Ellen

resided, and Monkhouse with the strange lady arrived there in no long time. It was a fine summer's morning, and the window was open in Ellen's chamber when they entered; the air was warm and balmy, and she stood in need of every breath she could catch, for the action of her lungs was now failing from day to day. Still, her face was not marred by the disease; she was yet beautiful as in the days of her health, though there were traces of languor on her countenance. Everything in the room bore an aspect of neatness, cleanliness and comfort; on the table there were a stand of sweet-smelling flowers and a bunch of fine grapes which had been sent to her as a present; and whatever little luxuries a sick person requires were close at hand.

'A lady has come with me this morning, Ellen,' said Monkhouse, after a few preliminary remarks; 'she was wishful to see you, and I have accompanied her here.'

'I am much obliged to her,—she is very kind,' replied Ellen, stretching out her hand.

As the lady took her hand, her own trembled, and her whole frame was observably agitated; she seemed to summon up all her power of self-restraint, but she was unable to conceal the fulness of her feelings. She looked earnestly at the locket which was hanging from Ellen's

neck, and which was never removed; and her mind, like that of Œdipus on the first dawning perception of the fate that had been long gathering round him,¹ seemed to be wandering far away and to be absorbed in abstraction. She gazed intently on Ellen's features with something of admiration mixed with pity, as though she might be tracing in them some image once familiar. She hung over her in silence for some time, holding her hand and looking eagerly on her countenance. At length, as though unable to restrain her feelings any longer, she fell upon the neck of the sick girl and wept aloud. The struggle between strong feeling and stern self-control had ceased, and all attempts to repress emotion were swept away in a warm, unrestrained, overflowing gush of tears. What was passing through the lady's mind we cannot know positively. Was she calling up scenes of distant date—incidents of sin and sorrow which had tinged her later years with the sombre tones of anxiety and regret? Was that dark night passing across her memory, when a helpless child had been removed from her and placed she knew not where? Was she contrasting the peaceful death-bed of the young person before her, after having been left an

¹ Οἷόν μ' ἀκούσαντ' ἀρτίως ἔχει, γύναι,

Ψυχῆς πλάνημα, κἀνακίνησις φρενῶν.—*Œdip. Tyr.* l. 727.

outcast in infancy, and having grown up in respectability, with her own lot, more highly favoured in worldly gifts, but more scantily endowed with the essentials of happiness? Upon these questions we have no means of judging with certainty: we mark the exhibition of irresistible emotion, but we have no clue to the particular source out of which it springs.

At length the lady's grief seemed to exhaust itself: her sobs became less audible, and her tears ceased; she rose from her prostrate position, and re-assumed an appearance of composure.

‘My dear girl,’ she said, ‘you seem very low in strength; but I trust you are free from severe pain; your frame of mind too seems to be one of patience and resignation.’

‘I have no desire whatever, ma’am, to continue longer here; I am in God’s hands, and when He calls I am ready to depart.’

‘You are young, and to many at your age life is fresh and full of hope; but they know not, and it is perhaps well they should not, how many disappointments and trials are in store for them—how many temptations will meet them—how many regrets and bitter recollections may attend them. Friends may sorrow at your departure, but they must regard it as the summons of a merciful Providence to you.’

‘May I ask, ma’am, with whom I have the pleasure of speaking?’

‘I am quite a stranger here; and if I were to give you my name it would be entirely unknown to you. I shall now be obliged to bid you farewell, for the time which I allotted myself for this call is almost exhausted.’

‘Mr. Monkhouse,’ suggested Ellen, ‘is my kind friend and pastor; would you object, ma’am, before you leave to unite with us in prayer?’

The lady consented, and joined in prayer with apparent fervour; after which she impressed a long warm kiss on Ellen’s lips, and left the room pensive and sad, but not without the marks of satisfaction and comfort.

‘Mr. Monkhouse,’ she said, after the two had entered the sitting-room below,—‘I leave with you this sum of money for the patient you are attending so faithfully. On this paper you will see the address of a London bank with initials attached to it; if more money be wanted, write there; and whether or not, inform me by letter whenever this interesting young person is removed,—I say this, for it is too evident that her life is drawing fast to a close. I thank you very sincerely for your kindness to me, and wish you adieu.’

So saying she left, unwilling that Monkhouse should accompany her: hailing a cab that was

passing she drove off, and was never heard of again. She left as she came,—a mystery. Monkhouse complied with her request, but he received no answer to his communication.

‘Mr. Monkhouse,’ asked Ellen, when he had gone up-stairs again to take his leave,—‘do you know that lady?’

‘No; I saw her for the first time when she called on me this morning, and she has left me no clue to her name or address. She has placed a hundred pounds in my hands for your use.’

‘That confirms my suspicion. Is she a married lady? Has she a wedding-ring on her finger?’

‘She kept her left-hand glove on: I could not judge.’

‘Mr. Monkhouse, that lady is my mother.’

‘Do you think so?’

‘I am sure of it; I do not doubt it in the least. My perceptions in such a case are much quicker than yours; and probably the suspicion crossed your mind.’

‘I must confess it did.’

‘Did you trace any resemblance between us?’

‘I thought certainly there was a likeness.’

‘I ran my fingers down the lady’s features, and I am quite persuaded of the likeness. She is larger in figure and features than I ever was;

but the resemblance is undoubted. Then, I am very quick in distinguishing tones of voices even to the minutest variation; and that lady's voice in certain peculiar notes is the very same as mine. Why, again, should she show such strong emotion if she had no interest in me by relationship? I heard her, too—for my hearing is very quick—say “my dear child” amidst her sobs, which seemed like an involuntary and unguarded admission. I have no doubt whatever but that my conjecture is correct. Our instincts rarely fail us: you judge by sight, and in such a case as this are more likely to be mistaken. Is it not a strange meeting—ordained by Providence, I trust, for a good end? Here am I, after having been cast out in infancy, now awaiting my departure, and yet happier than that lady, who seems to have abundance of this world's goods. She has probably suffered much for what she has done; she deserves our pity perhaps more than our blame; and if her heart has not hitherto been religiously disposed, I trust that this meeting may bring her to a sense of Christian duty. How often have I longed in secret to know who was my mother—to speak to her, to join with her in prayer, to believe her to be in some degree excusable in her treatment of me, and now my wish has been satisfied in this providential way!’

CHAPTER XXI.

ANOTHER MORN THAN OURS.

IN one of the closing chapters of 'Paley's Natural Theology,' there are some beautiful ideas on the providential manner in which our nature gradually accommodates itself to temporal extinction. The Rev. Canon Melvill, in his sermon on the text, 'As thy days, so shall thy strength be,' taking the higher standard of Christian support, is eloquent after his best fashion on the same topic. And such remarks will be confirmed by those who have been accustomed to witness the last scenes of life. Ellen, however, did not require to be taught by the lesson of decaying nature that death would be a relief: she knew it would be a gain in the highest sense.

On what an attenuated and still attenuating thread life often seems to be suspended in cases of lingering consumption! Ellen sank gradually, but almost imperceptibly. Morning rose and night closed in, each revolving twenty-four hours withdrawing some portion of her vital

energy, but so gently that the eye could scarcely observe it. Everything went round quietly and stillly. No murmur escaped her lips, not even a wish for what she had not : she existed in the patient waiting of hope. But the final day must come, and it would scarcely be considered by any an unwelcome one. One mild summer's evening Mrs. Graham was sitting with Ellen ; she had been with her all the afternoon. The sun was setting in its majesty, robed in the many-coloured clouds that took their radiance from its beams, and throwing its slanting rays into Ellen's chamber. Mrs. Graham perceived, from the low, sinking, almost inactive respiration, that the end was near.

‘Margaret,’ said Ellen faintly, ‘let me hear once again that noble composition on the “Close of Life” which we have read together before.’

‘Surely ; it is here at hand’—

I am old and blind !

Men point at me as smitten by God's frown—

Afflicted and deserted of my mind,—

Yet am I not cast down.

I am weak, yet strong—

I murmur not that I no longer see—

Poor, old, and helpless, I the more belong,

Father Supreme ! to Thee.

O merciful One !

When men are furthest then Thou art most near ;

When friends pass by, my weakness shun,

Thy chariot I hear.

Thy glorious face
Is leaning towards me—and its holy light
Shines in upon my lonely dwelling-place,
And there is no more night.

On my bended knee
I recognise Thy purpose clearly shown—
My vision Thou hast dimm'd, that I may see
Thyself—Thyself alone.

I have naught to fear—
This darkness is the shadow of Thy wing—
Beneath it I am almost sacred—here
Can come no evil thing.

Oh! I seem to stand
Trembling, where foot of mortal ne'er hath been,
Wrapped in the radiance of Thy sinless hand,
Which eye hath never seen.

Visions come and go—
Shapes of resplendent beauty round me throng,
From angel lips I seem to hear the flow
Of soft and holy song.

It is nothing now,
When Heaven is opening on my sightless eyes—
When airs from Paradise refresh my brow,
That earth in darkness lies.

In a purer clime
My being fills with rapture—waves of thought
Roll in upon my spirit—strains sublime
Break over me unsought.

Give me now my lyre!
I feel the stirrings of a gift divine:
Within my bosom glows unearthly fire,
Lit by no skill of mine.

‘And now, Margaret,’ whispered Ellen, after lying a minute in quiet meditation, ‘I have another request to make of you.’

‘Well, dear, you have only to mention it,’ Mrs. Graham replied, bending over her to listen.

‘Bess must attend my funeral ; and after that, you must take her to your own home : she will feel the loss of me keenly, I am sure ; she has loved me with a child’s love and protected me with a parent’s strength ; you will be kind to her and comfort her for my sake, I know. Will you unloose this locket from my neck and keep it?’

Bess was now upon the bed, as she had mostly been during the time that her mistress had been there ; she seemed to be quite conscious of Ellen’s condition, nestled closer and closer to her as she became weaker, and showed more and more anxiety for the usual caress.

As Mrs. Graham was gazing upon Ellen’s face, she saw a shadow, almost imperceptible, pass across it, as though the features were undergoing a change. At this moment Monkhouse entered the room : Ellen knew his step, and held out her hand ; then a beam of exultation and victory seemed to light up her countenance ; and saying, ‘The moment is come, and I am thankful,’ she died without struggle or pain,

before Monkhouse had released her hand from his grasp. The sightless girl then first saw; the light of eternal day then burst on her; 'she had another morn than ours.'

Bess was the first to remark the precise moment when the 'change passed over Ellen; she started, drew up to her hastily, licked her face as though for the purpose of restoring animation and warmth into the cold form, and then, uttering a low deep moan, buried her nose in the bosom of her dead mistress.

Monkhouse was much impressed with the sight; he had never before seen a human being die; he gazed earnestly on the features that had so lately been instinct with life, but they told no tale; they were calm and gentle as in a sleep. But where was the spirit that so lately animated them? He could gain no response; death reveals no secrets. Those features were silent, but faith spake.

Poor Mrs. Horner! No one among Ellen's many sorrowing friends felt her decease more keenly than she. Though Monkhouse, by Ellen's request, invested for her use a considerable sum of money, she seemed to value it as nothing in contrast with her loss. She had loved her as her own child, and she could not have attended her with more assiduity and affection if she had been her first-born.

When Mrs. Horner had completed her arrangements for the funeral, many of Ellen's young friends came to take a last look at her. There she lay, as beautiful as ever, only pale and still as marble. Mrs. Horner seemed to take a pride in her appearance even then, and had arrayed her in the neatest manner, breaking the pure white of her dress by a coloured ribbon here and there, and a few freshly-gathered flowers. The young women came up to her softly ; some bent over her in silence and went their way ; some kissed her and dropped a tear on her pale features.

And among those who visited the cottage was old Mrs. Maxwell ; she felt a satisfaction in keeping her word, and letting a tear fall on the cold face of one for whom she had entertained great affection in life. It was a picture to see the old woman, still possessed of all her faculties, but like a being from another world, bending over the corpse of one so beautiful and young. ' Poor thing ! ' she said in a low tone, laying her shrivelled finger on the marble brow, as though she were thinking aloud,—' poor thing ! And yet, why say so ? She is far better off than we are ; she has gone home while we tarry in a strange country. I knew she would soon pass away ; I have seen her as she is now lying many a time in my dreams, and I was sure my

vision would come true. And how like she is my own bonny blind child ! I fancy I see her yet in her coffin with the same sweet face as this is, though many a year has passed and many a rough road has been trodden since then ! Well, it will soon be my turn to go the same way ; and then I expect I shall meet my child and Ellen, both bright and fair, knowing as they are known and seeing as they are seen. Is not this world the scene of strange providences, as if God's ways were unequal ? Here am I, yet living—I who have gone through hardships and perils such as few women could have borne—while these young lambs have been taken away before me ! And yet, everything is on a level at last ; God's ways are then equal to all ; and what difference is there whether we die at eighteen or eighty, if we compare our life with that long day beyond ? God's will be done !'

The funeral was conducted very privately ; Monkhouse, Frederick Shorland, and Mr. and Mrs. Graham were all that attended at the house. As the small party assembled, and went through the usual ceremony of taking a glass of wine with a sweet biscuit, there was a secret heaviness upon their hearts for which they could not fully account. A young woman, tender and delicate, blind and dependent, had

passed away—one who was alone in the world—without father or mother, without brother or sister, without relative near or distant,—and yet they felt a void in her absence, as though one had gone forth from among them whose place could not be filled again.

Ellen was buried in the graveyard of a quiet suburban church, at some distance from the bustle and smoke of Yarndale; and as the procession arrived there, the sun was shining on her grave. Here a large concourse of people had assembled. Young women from the Sunday Schools were there, neatly dressed in mourning. Mr. and Mrs. Charnock were present to pay the last tribute of affection to one they had admired and loved. Mr. Scragson had brought old Jack up in his vehicle; and they both stood with heads uncovered and serious countenances, as the coffin passed into the church. Many an eye was wet as Monkhouse read the Office for Burial in tones impressive from the deep feeling with which they were uttered; many a heart throbbed as the mould fell, earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, on the coffin of one whose years had been so few and whose life had been so lovely; and many returned home with a gentle sorrow infused with exalted hopes from that

Service, which for its sublimity is unsurpassed in any language.

But where is poor Bess all the while? So long as Ellen lay unburied she never left her; she watched by her side unceasingly, as though she might have expected her awakening; she licked her face, as if she were seeking to resuscitate her; she lay by her; not fiercely turning on any who came to look on her or to dress her, but subdued and moaning, as though conscious that some great change had passed over her.

Bess rode up in the procession, with a band of crape neatly fastened round her neck; she was led by a cord to Ellen's grave: this was a necessary precaution; for, if she had been free, she would have followed the coffin as it was lowered into it. She was carried back to the coach, and returned with Mr. and Mrs. Graham. Her home with them could scarcely be called a new one. Mrs. Horner would have gladly kept her; but she respected Ellen's wish.

On the following day Bess was missing, and no one had seen her leave the house; Mrs. Graham was much pained at the circumstance, and sent in all directions in search of her; but she could not be found. In the evening, however, she came back, and lay down quietly after taking a little food. For several days

this was repeated ; when the family determined to trace her movements. They found that she went straight to the cottage where Mrs. Horner resided, and there examined every room where Ellen had been accustomed to go, lingering especially in that where she had last lain : then, when she did not meet with the object of her search, she proceeded to the churchyard where Ellen was buried, some three miles distant, and rested on the grave for a considerable time, as though she were watching and listening : after which she returned home wearied and sad. Mrs. Graham endeavoured by great kindness and attention to wean her from her deep-seated sorrow ; and, as time passed on, she regained some degree of health and spirits ; but she never forgot her late mistress : many little incidents from time to time seemed suddenly to wake up her recollections of one who had gone ; many of her ways evinced plainly that her regret could not be entirely eradicated ; the predominant affections of her heart were buried in Ellen's grave.

CHAPTER XXII.

FRINGES.

THE narrative has extended precisely over twelve months; and, as it is now some years since the events occurred which are related in the last chapter, it may be well to fringe the 'unsensational story' by a brief account of the several characters introduced into it, up to the present time.

The Church and Schools were in due time built at Mudlington; Monkhouse was inducted as incumbent in legal form; and the various operations incidental to such a parish were conducted by him with vigilance and energy. After a while he obtained the help of a curate and certain lay agencies, which in some degree lightened his labours and relieved his anxieties. An endowment of 180*l.* a year had been provided for the church; so that the poor had their free sittings in the best part of the building; and these they occupied in large numbers, apparently thankful for the privileges they enjoyed. Those who could afford it, occupied

their own pews, the rents of which increased the income. The services were made attractive by good choral music, and Monkhouse from experience and culture attained to considerable excellence in his public ministrations.

The Schools again, both on the week-day and Sunday, were conducted with success: the old Sunday-schoolroom was turned into a Mechanics' Institute, and made useful for a variety of purposes; and the scholars were transferred into the new and commodious building. By degrees the effete management was superseded by a body of intelligent members of the Church with Monkhouse at their head, Shorland and Graham being his right-hand supporters. Night schools were instituted for writing, reading, and arithmetic; and classes were formed for instruction on various subjects, both religious and secular, in order that the young people might have an opportunity, if so disposed, of fitting themselves for any duty they might be called upon to fulfil in life. A good and extensive Library was collected, and a Penny Bank was established. Sick and Funeral Societies also were set on foot. There were three Day Schools under certificated teachers—severally for boys, girls and infants—on the best principles, both in their structural arrangement and in the system

of education pursued there ; and these after a while became so highly appreciated in the neighbourhood as to be almost self-supporting. No expense had been spared either upon the Church or Schools, in order to their being permanent and practically useful : their promoters had avoided that great mistake so frequently made in our Protestant Communion, of running up certain walls, scraping together the minimum of endowments, forgetting that there are poor people in the district, and leaving the future, as some would say, to the winds and waves of chance, as others, to the protection and direction of Providence.

It must not be supposed, however, that there were no drawbacks in the management of such a district as this. When on platforms the audience is favoured with sunshiny descriptions of parochial success, an experienced person will conclude that there is a shady side of the picture also, if we could only catch a sight of it. It cannot be denied but that Mudlington underwent a gradual process of improvement, materially, socially, and morally ; but the battle between progress and obstruction was unceasing and pertinaciously sustained. Monkhouse alone would have availed but little comparatively ; his mind and feelings were of too refined an order for a stern conflict with the rude bear-

ing and social immoralities of many among his parishioners; but Shorland and Graham joined him heart and hand in working a reformation throughout the district; and their influence became very perceptible. Beginning with their own mills, they endeavoured, so far as they were able, to infuse a tone of propriety among all the people of the neighbourhood who came under their influence, directly or indirectly; they improved their own cottages and promoted sanitary regulations generally; they encouraged industry and sobriety; and they set an example to those beneath them of doing to others as they would desire to be treated in return.

The Rev. Mr. Monkhouse is not still at Mudlington: he left some nine months ago after labouring in that unpromising, but not altogether unfructifying, vineyard between five and six years. Many changes had passed over his family during that period; Sir Richard and Lady Monkhouse had been bowed down in sorrow by the loss of two of their sons. The second had died from sunstroke in India. Poor fellow! far away from his home, he had suddenly fallen, not by the sword of the enemy, but by the unseen arrow that flieth at noon-day, as brave and generous and true-hearted a soldier as any in the British army. The

eldest had been cut off during the past year: though fresh-looking and handsome, he had never been of robust health; and whether from late hours in the House of Commons or simply from natural decay of the physical system, he became consumptive, and died after an illness of several months, to the intense grief of his parents and brother, as well as the sincere regret of all who knew him both in public and private life. Though he might never have attained to great eminence as an orator or a statesman, he was already listened to favourably in the House, and much esteemed for his practical usefulness both as a member of Parliament and a country gentleman.

As Charles was now the heir to the title and property, and indeed the only child, of Sir Richard Monkhouse, it was quite out of the question that he should remain longer at Mudlington. His health became naturally a subject of greater solicitude to his parents; and, as they are now far in the decline of life, his assistance and support are required at Grass-down Park. He was, therefore, compelled to resign his incumbency and to retire from his sphere of clerical duty. In ordinary circumstances he would not have meditated such a step; for, uncongenial as his labour might seemingly have been, it had become familiar and

interesting to him ; and, though it was among a people so unlike in feeling and manner to those with whom his previous life had brought him into association, he had nevertheless seen much to admire in the rough sense and hearty feeling of his parishioners, even when these qualities were united with a brusqueness of manner sometimes verging into rudeness. They had become acquainted with his peculiarities, and he with theirs ; and so by mutual forbearance they got on together very well. In the ordinary vulgar sense of the term, Monkhouse could not have become popular ; nor, indeed, was it desirable he should. His natural gifts, his habits of study and thought, his retiring disposition, his refinement of taste, were the very opposite of those characteristics which confer a title to popularity. Still he was much respected, which is far better in the end than all the coruscations of mere empty applause. With the rich classes of Yarndale, Monkhouse had but little visiting intercourse. Yarndale is too large, and, adopting the maxim that ‘time is money,’ too busy, and, may it not be said ? too indifferent to points of etiquette and the delicacies of the gentle life, to seek out a clergyman in the rude district of Mudlington.

That Monkhouse had gained the esteem of

his people was evidenced by the willingness with which they subscribed for a testimonial to him on his leaving Mudlington. In the Schools he had never cultivated any excitement in his favour by much hand-shaking and by profuse civilities ; he had not sought a fickle popularity by placing himself on a level with every man, woman, and child in the building ; he had endeavoured to maintain good discipline, knowing that without it there cannot be effectual teaching ; and he considered that the gain of a little fleeting applause would be at too great a cost if it were at the loss of that order which is so essential to the intrinsic success of a school. On the other hand, he was ever willing to render assistance to any who sought his aid ; he spared neither time nor pains in order to perform his duty faithfully, and no one was repulsed to whom he could really be of service. His conduct, therefore, was appreciated in the church and schools ; and though some said he was reserved, others proud, yet all admitted that he was sincere and unselfish in his purposes. And such, too, was the general sentiment entertained towards him throughout the parish. He had never been able to assume the rough-and-ready manner with a rough-and-ready people ; he never fairly mastered the practice of everlasting hand-shaking which

prevails so much in manufacturing districts ; he ever seemed to the people to have a tone of quiet reserve about him, which they designated by various names. Still, he showed to the poor no rudeness ; he was liberal to those in need ; he was as willing to offer his services as a clergyman to the humblest as to the highest ; nay, his attentions were perhaps more assiduous to the lowly in estate than to those in better circumstances. He consequently succeeded in gaining, at any rate, the regard of his parishioners, and not the least of the poor, who in the long run do not err widely in their estimate of clerical character.

The testimonial was a silver shield of the value of 100*l.*, bearing the Monkhouse arms, and inscribed with a suitable address : it was presented by our old friend Mr. Peter Crumbleholme. The Councillor had now become an Alderman of Yarndale, and it is supposed that the dignity of Mayor is within his grasp,—only Mrs. C., it is whispered, objects to the trouble and anxiety of providing and dispensing what are termed the ‘Mayoral hospitalities.’ His daughter Julia has been married for some years to Mr. Johnson, who now holds an incumbency in the neighbourhood ; and his son has just graduated at Oxford, well up in the Class List, and is in expectation of a Fellowship. For his success

he is indebted in a great degree to Monkhouse, who took considerable interest in his career, and during the Long Vacations constituted himself his gratuitous tutor. Alderman Crumbleholme is now the Senior Warden of the church at Mudlington, with Mr. Charnock as his colleague. The latter has retired from business : having no family, and having realised enough for the wants of himself and his wife, he has disposed of the good-will of his shop, and taken up his abode in a neat suburban cottage, where he is enjoying his *otium cum dignitate*, and showing hospitality to his old friends.

We have not space to record the speeches that were delivered on the presentation of the testimonial: this much we may say,—that they were genuine expressions of feeling. The voice of Alderman Crumbleholme faltered ominously once or twice ; and Monkhouse had to screw up his will firmly, lest he should break down. Other complimentary addresses were delivered ; some tears were shed among the company ; much shaking of hands followed ; and then came the final separation of a pastor from his flock.

Some may be curious to know whether Monkhouse be still a bachelor. For their information we have to state that he has laid aside that

title. Very soon after he vacated the incumbency of Mudlington Church, he married Alice Shorland. They had been engaged for some years ; but their courtship was very undemonstrative. It might have been possible to have traced the current of their love in its sinuosities under sunshine and shadow, in its full-flowings and its obstructions ; but this is a department of description more suited to those who delight in sentiment than to an unsensational author.

But were there no impediments in the way of this marriage ? Did the stream of true love run smooth for once ? From what has been already said, it may be inferred that there were certain obstacles to its course. Old Mr. Shorland, as it has been observed before, was horrified at the idea of his daughter marrying a beggarly curate ; he only looked upon Monkhouse as a man who had to preach to snuffy old women and factory girls, on 100*l.* a year or so. Trade was his life ; and whatever did not belong to trade was to him but as dross in comparison with the refined silver. And so he had gone on to old age, his mind moving in one groove, his affections set on one object. But the mind cannot hold out for ever in its rigorous tension. It so happened that one of those panics arose which about every decade shake

our commercial interests. Mr. Shorland's arms were extended in speculation to every quarter of the globe ; his goods were in the most distant lands ; and as no returns for them could be obtained, vast sums were locked up in them for a time. What, when a younger man, he would not have regarded as a matter of such momentous import, was now too much for him ; his faculties gave way ; his vigour broke down ; and by degrees he sunk into a species of imbecility or listlessness. In this particular crisis of commerce there was no reason to apprehend any ultimate loss ; Frederick had now become the mainstay of the firm, and he waited events with patience ; the mills had been most successful under his direction ; and in due course the pressure passed away, and the money that had been locked up returned abundantly. The old gentleman, however, never recovered from the shock ; he is now more gentle and serious than he was, and is easily led by Mrs. Shorland ; he is feeble in body and mind, though not incapable of reasoning on many matters. His leading impression is, that he is very poor ; and, though worth considerably more than half a million, he receives every Monday morning a sovereign, as though he had to live on it for the week.

But an objection to the marriage was entertained, also, by Sir Richard and Lady Monk-

house. They could not regard as other than humiliating the alliance of Charles with the daughter of a Yarndale merchant—the conjunction of Norman ancestry with Dhollera cotton. If he had continued a younger son, in Holy Orders, it might not have been so serious a matter; but now, their only child, and heir to the title and property, he ought, they considered, to have formed a more aristocratic connection. On the other hand, they had reason to believe that the lady was highly educated, amiable, and genteel in her bearing; they were besides more anxious about the perpetuity of the title and property in the family than they had been. They considered, too, that the engagement was one of some standing, and must be honourably kept. They, therefore, gave their consent to the marriage in a generous and ungrudging spirit—the only prudent and chivalrous resolve in a balance of such conflicting doubts.

The Rev. C. and Mrs. Monkhouse are now residing at a good manor house about a quarter of a mile from Grassdown Park. He is taking the duty for the old clergyman, the Rector of Grassdown Church, who is now very feeble; she who was Alice Shorland has already established herself in the affections of Sir Richard and his lady; and we have heard that

the genealogical tree of the Monkhouses is not likely to be uprooted or to fall into decay.

Daft Joe occasionally stops Monkhouse; and, after asking for a trifle, he invariably inquires for 'th' little chap as is to bring in the millinery reign.' Joe has begun to think the good time long in coming.

It is now understood, too, that Frederick Shorland is preparing to follow at no distant time in the steps of his friend. Since his first visit to Grassdown Park his attentions to Miss Woburn have been those of a devoted knight; nor have they been repudiated. He has repeated his visit twice or thrice, and has always been assiduous in his endeavours to ingratiate himself in her esteem. He kept up for some time an indirect communication with the lady through Monkhouse; he used to forward occasionally to Grassdown Park any dresses that were marked by novelty of pattern or invention; and at length he glided into more direct correspondence, till matters were finally arranged, satisfactorily to all parties. He is now fitting up and furnishing a suitable mansion in the suburbs of Yarndale, and is making every other requisite preparation for his new style of life. Lady Monkhouse is sorry at the prospect of losing her relative and assistant; but as the

match seems to be an eligible one, she does not complain. Mr. Shorland is a sensible, amiable, and wealthy man; and Miss Woburn is certainly attached to him. It would not, therefore, be right to throw obstacles in the way of the match: and the loss of Miss Woburn is likely to be compensated in some degree by the almost constant attendance of Mrs. C. Monkhouse at Grassdown Park.

Dolman is still a bachelor; nor does it appear that there is any likelihood of his becoming a Benedict at present. Indeed, he seems so busy in his professional engagements and duties that, according to his own account, he has no time to think about such vanities. He is getting on remarkably well at the Bar, and follows up his legal studies and practice as a pleasure. He has adopted the circuit which includes the Cramford Assizes in its range, and he frequently makes a call at Grassdown Park in his round. He keeps up his acquaintance, also, with several of the ladies to whom he was introduced at the great ball. He carries on an innocent flirtation now and then with Miss Bessie Popplewell, who is still so called. Miss Blenkinsop is now Mrs. Augustus Sloving; but Dolman occasionally shakes hands and has a little pleasant chat with her. Indeed, Mr. Blenkinsop has given him several briefs, and has been pleased to compli-

ment him on the way in which the causes have been conducted. But Dolman's greatest feat has consisted in the settlement of the lawsuit that had so long harassed Mouthenden De Bracy Mouthenden, Esq. It had become complicated through want of judgment, and was increasing in complication from year to year, when he simply took pains to unravel the threads and arranged the dispute without any great difficulty. Mouthenden De Bracy Mouthenden, Esq., declares that he is a most promising young lawyer, and affirms that he would stand very high and claim profound respect, if he could only carry his pedigree a few centuries further back into the dark ages.

Sir Timothy Brierly is getting infirm, and would gladly dispose of his mills if he could meet with a purchaser: his son has but little aptitude for business; and, like too many lively sons of sober fathers in Yarndale, he would soon manage to dissipate by extravagance and untradesmanlike procedure what the knight had accumulated. Sir Timothy is not an ill-disposed man: he is kind and charitable in his mode of thinking and acting; and while he still tolerates Dr. McThwacker and his worshippers, he does not go with them altogether in their sentiments. 'Why shouldn't we be at peace one with another?' he reasons; 'there are good

and estimable people that attend church as well as chapel, on an average.'

Mr. and Mrs. Jacob Shorland are a very respectable couple, and fulfil their social duties as becomingly as their neighbours. The lady is of an easy temper; and whenever Jacob is angry, on being overreached in a bargain, and begins to mix up maledictions and Scripture, she takes it all very coolly, and pours out tea as leisurely as if nothing had happened. They have two children, somewhat of the Jacobean type,—not handsome, but such as are likely to get on in the world. Mr. and Mrs. Jacob have been oscillating since their marriage between church and chapel. Dr. McThwacker, with Miss Flintoff and Mrs. Meikle, has laid violent siege on them; but as far as can be seen at present, the balance seems likely to incline gradually and permanently in favour of the Church.

Miss Frumpington still lives or dozes. One of the Misses Skirving is still a spinster; the other has married an Irishman, who, it is somewhat uncharitably believed, is waiting for Miss Frumpington quietly to doze away, leaving her worldly goods behind her.

Of Herr Pfuffer there has not been any information for some time; when last heard of, he was somewhere on his travels.

Old Mr. and Mrs. Maxwell are dead. They survived the inheritance of their property three years; but they never visited Scotland during that time. They took up their residence, with their son James and his wife, in a pleasant part of the suburbs of Yarndale, and seemed to enjoy the change of scene and circumstances. The old lady's strong will in some degree gave way; she admitted that she had been through a great portion of her life too stubborn and unbending; and with mental faculties still clear she yielded to the mere gradual decay of nature, holding fast by the anchor of Christian faith and maintaining a spirit of Christian charity. The Sergeant sank in like manner, holding the Scriptures in the highest reverence, and to the last placing in the next rank 'Lord Wellington's Despatches.' It would not have suited James to be idle; so he is now a master-machinist, and instead of working himself superintends his mechanics. He is not in a very large way of business; but it is a profitable one according to its extent, and it keeps him employed. Indeed, he yet, as the whim seizes him, occasionally puts on his working dress, and goes through a day's manual labour, 'just,' as he says, 'to keep his hand in.' Mr. and Mrs. Graham have now two or three children, one of whom was christened 'Ellen,' all hearty and

strong : they spend a portion of every summer at Raeburn.

Jack Timbertoes is now very infirm, poor fellow ! He is, however, well off in worldly circumstances. He has retired from the service of Shorland & Co. on a pension ; and old Mrs. Maxwell bequeathed to him half-a-sovereign a week for his life. ‘ He is only a salt-water old goose,’ she used to say ; ‘ but he’s an honest fellow, and has fought and bled for his country.’ His efforts on behalf of his niece turned out very favourably ; she stayed in the Home of Refuge some time, as an assistant after probation, and was a great favourite of the matron. After awhile she got married to a respectable mechanic, and lived in a comfortable and becoming style. Jack now lodges with the couple, and is somewhat proud of his achievement in bringing his niece to respectability and comfort. So that the old sailor keeps up his spirits, and occasionally entertains his friends with a glass of grog and a pipe, and sings his old songs, though in musical phrase his voice has become somewhat ‘ veiled.’ He talks about ‘ going aloft ’ after the sailor of his song, and with a view to this he is always anxious to ‘ clear up things as he goes on.’ He has formed his own opinions, which are rather peculiar, about the condition of a future state ; and he

is slightly troubled with an apprehension lest he may meet any of 'them frog-eating mounseers' there. He fails in his powers of locomotion; but he mostly gets to Mudlington Church once on a Sunday, always occupying the same seat, fixing his eye steadily on the clergyman, and ready to criticise the sermon on his way home, with the confidence of an Oxford Professor of Divinity,—and perhaps with a truer knowledge of what is required in a pulpit address.

Mr. Jenkins died about a year ago, from a complaint of some standing. He was very generally respected and regretted on his decease; for, though eccentric and unaccountable in many things, he in the main lived up to his own maxim, and acted on Christian principles.

Mr. Jabez Corby is going on as usual. He is doing good in his own way, which is generally no other person's way. Whether, however, the progress be by concession or by antagonism, it frequently eventuates in a useful result. He is a great favourite still with old Jack.

And where is our old friend Mr. Bompas? Is he still in the flesh? Does he carry it in the same bulk? Yes, he is living and looking well, though he has had to pass through some vicissitudes during the last few years. One summer's

day he stood on the hill crowned by the ancient castle at Lancaster, and he surveyed admiringly the beautiful landscape of mountain, river and cultivated fields that was stretched before him. Then, turning towards that ponderous gateway under John O'Gaunt's time-honoured tower, at which so many have entered without finding their way back again, he inquired of the ill-looking man by his side,—‘Con I preach a free gospul here?’ ‘Ne'er mind thy gospel, stupid,’ was the reply,—‘look to thy schedule, mon.’ And there was some reason in the advice; for friend Bompas's accounts were found to be in such disorder, and certain of his transactions came before the Bankruptcy Judge in such a questionable shape, that he was ‘put back’ several times in order to amend his balance-sheet, and explain certain delicate little intricacies in it. At length, however, he came out, a white-washed man; and he still retains his old shop, a friend of his having taken his goods at a valuation previous to his visit to Lancaster. He has no connection with Mudlington Church or Schools; he has a preaching-room of his own, where he indoctrinates his audience after his old fashion; he has formed a specific sect called Bompasites or Free-gospellers, and is said to be still powerful in ‘splaining and splounding.’

Mr. Job Scragson is in his usual health and spirits. He attends Mudlington Church with his two boys pretty regularly on a Sunday evening; but he mostly holds to his position that he does it as a matter of business. He has been known, however, to admit in confidence, that, as his wife exhausts herself so much at Bethesda, as to be obliged to take more hot gin-and-water than is good for her on her return home, 'just to keep the wind off her stomach,' he has begun to think that he shall have to do a small portion of the religion himself, or it will not 'come all right in the end.'

Miss Scrimples is yet a useful teacher in the Mudlington Church Sunday School. She became reconciled to Monkhouse; but she never gave up her impression that he would have been more effective if he had preached with more unction.

Esther married a mechanic, and Monkhouse christened her first-born. She pronounces it to be a perfect specimen of infantine humanity. She is now very comfortable with her husband; but they have had what is termed in Lancashire rather 'a rough settling down.' In a prolonged contest for the mastery she acted with so much strategic skill that she came off victorious. It must be observed, too, that she

wields her power for good, by keeping her husband from the public-house, and taking him with her to church.

Jam finis chartæ: so ends this ‘Unsensational Story.’

THE END.

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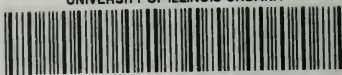
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